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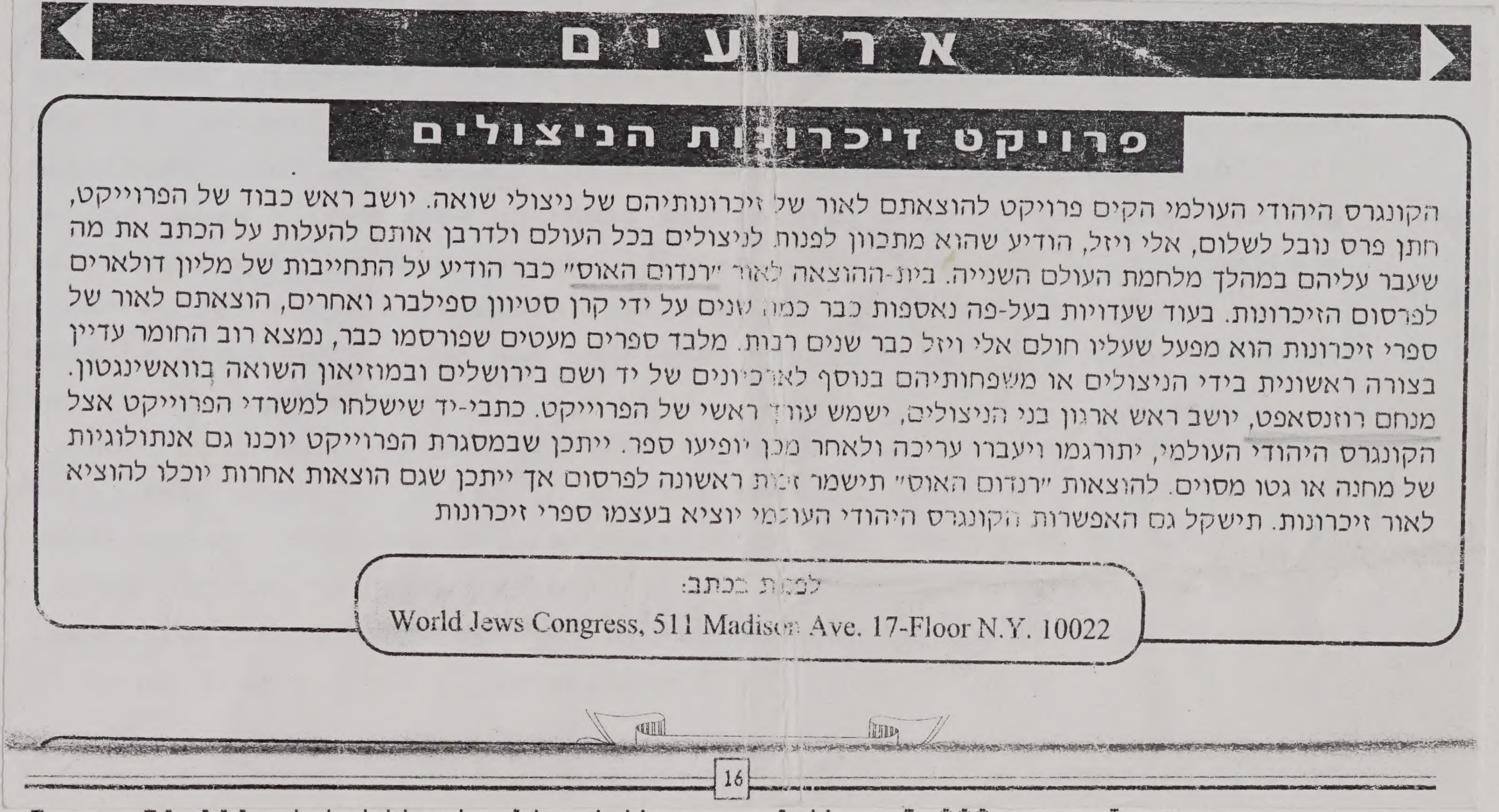
"... Rows and rows of names in columns, dates of birth and other personal data. They include causes of death such as heart failure, kidney disease, pneumonia, cerebral hemorrhage, and so on. From the



ארועים

פרויקט זיכרונות הניצולים

הקונגרס היהודי העולמי הקים פרויקט להוצאתם לאור של זיכרונותיהם של ניצולי שואה. יושב ראש כבוד של הפרוייקט, חתן פרס נובל לשלום, אלי ויזל, הודיע שהוא מתכוון לפנות לניצולים בכל העולם ולדרבן אותם להעלות על הכתב את מה שעבר עליהם במהלך מלחמת העולם השנייה. בית-ההוצאה לאור "רנדום האוס" כבר הודיע על התחייבות של מליון דולארים לפרסום הזיכרונות. בעוד שעדויות בעל-פה נאספות כבר כמה שנים על ידי קרן סטיוון ספילברג ואחרים, הוצאתם לאור של ספרי זיכרונות הוא מפעל שעליו חולם אלי ויזל כבר שנים רבות. מלבד ספרים מעטים שפורסמו כבר, נמצא רוב החומר עדיין בצורה ראשונית בידי הניצולים או משפחותיהם בנוסף לארכיונים של יד ושם בירושלים ובמוזיאון השואה בוואשינגטון. מנחם רוזנסאפט, יושב ראש ארגון בני הניצולים, ישמש עורך ראשי של הפרוייקט. כתבי-יד שישלחו למשרדי הפרוייקט אצל הקונגרס היהודי העולמי, יתורגמו ויעברו עריכה ולאחר מכן יופיעו ספר. ייתכן שבמסגרת הפרוייקט יוכנו גם אנתולוגיות של מחנה או גטו מסוים. להוצאות "רנדום האוס" תישמר זכות ראשונה לפרסום אך ייתכן שגם הוצאות אחרות יוכלו להוציא לאור זיכרונות. תישקל גם האפשרות הקונגרס היהודי העולמי יוציא בעצמו ספרי זיכרונות

לפנות בכתב:
World Jews Congress, 511 Madison Ave. 17-Floor N.Y. 10022

Pecs. 80.000 inhabitants lived there, of them 6.000 were Jews.

His father managed of the chemical section of a tanning factory, mainly his uncle's concern employing 2400 men.

At the age of three, he lost his mother, being raised in the house of her parents.

At the age of 9, his father introduced Andrew to a strange Aryan woman, who soon became his stepmother. His father there after converted to the Christian faith and expected his son to follow suite. Andrew refused. The implication of his decision made him subject to the "Numerus Clausus" decree, a restriction on the number of Jews allowed to be engaged in working places, schools, universities etc. He was permitted to continue his studies in the sixth class of the clerical high school of the Cisterciens order, only because of his christian mother's influence. Soon, he was to learn the virtues of being a Jew and the differences between him and the gentiles. This difference was further stressed, when after the German occupation of Hungary, discrimination led the Jews to be separated from their

fellow men in the newly established Ghetto.

During this time, Andrew Jehuda Garai, remained in the comparative safety of his father's home. However the adolescent felt himself belonging to his friends, and beloved girlfriend, the Jews. He informed the authorities of a Jew being hidden by a christian family, in his own house. The next day, he was arrested. Here our story begins.

After the war, Andrew returns to Hungary, to his Father's house. There, during the course of three weeks, he describes his own experience and narrates the testimony of his peoples peril on paper. Then he goes back to school. Antisemitism did not die with the war.

Now he joins the Zionist movement. The movement to establish an independent Jewish State. He receives training in agriculture and with his group, is given the opportunity to take part in the work of the "Bricha" organization: the smuggling of Jews from behind the iron curtain. He gets caught in this illegal activity, succeeds to escape and studies at the Medical School in his native town. His previous zionistic activities are again discovered when he refuses to sign a petition sentencing to death the archbishop of Hungary. Once more endangered, he flees from Stalinist Hungary with his summonsin his pocket.

In 1949 he arrives as a pioneer to Israel and takes part in its Wars. Finishes his studies in the school of medicine, at the University of Jerusalem.

Today he is a psychiatrist, still actively engaged with the plight of those who suffered in the Holocaust. Member of the "Israeli Auschwitz Committee", one of the fonders of "Amcha Organization for Psychosocial Support to Survivors of the Holocaust and The Second Generation", and other public activityes. He is married with two sons, who served in the israeli army.

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Respected World Jews Congress, Netania, 28.6.2001.

This advertisement urged me to send my evidence to You.

I have other, short scripta, which I will copy and send You if You will write me so.

May your holy work be blessed.

Garai A. Jehuda

SURVIVOR STORY.

The evidence of Haeftling No. 115-100. KZ. Dachau.

By: Andrew Jehuda Garai, M.D.

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To the memory to Them, who cannot tell their evidence.

This evidence is a part of the history of an old people.
A people expelled from his motherland,
This people lived in a diaspora,
In every corner of the world except his own.

It lived with the hospitality of the host nations,
and dreamt of recognition by them.

The road led to the skies,-hrough the chimneys.

From the chimeny came the sign of smoke
By day and
The vast column of illuminating red hot fire
By night

Did this fire harden nation
Learn a lesson
From what was done to it?

I would like to thank Mr. Paul Hoekman for correcting the english version, Mrs. Dorit Morgenstern for going over the manuscript and Mrs.Jeanette Wershow for her generosity without whose help the english translation would have been impossible.

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FOREWORD.

Pecs, a university city and seat of the bishop, is built on the slopes of the Mecsek mountains, in southwest Hungaria. It has a large railway junction, serving an important coal mining area and a vast industrial complex. The many towers and slender minarets confirm its gripping past and the importance of this ancient county town of eighty thousand inhabitants.

Here in the "First Tanning Factory of Pecs" in which over two thousand workers were employed. My uncle was the managing director and owner of more than half of its shares whilst my father was the chief tanning engineer.

When at the threshold of my consciousness, I had my first disappointment. My mother abandoned me. I was about three years old when she died of cancer. I wasn't told that from now on she would not caress me again, nor would I ever again, whilst seated on the thick carpet, hear the sound of her piano accompanying my father playing Paganini on the violin. All I was told was that she had travelled somewhere to a far away place, from where it was impossible to return.

I was very angry with her. Why hadn't she at least kissed me good bye, thereby completing something that for ever remained incomplete. Like a marvelous story with no ending. I kept searching for the end and meaning to this tale. It took me long time to realize that there would be no more house concerts. I waited in vain for a miracle to happen, that she would reappear laughing, picking me up from the floor to take me in her arms to reassure me that it all had been a joke.

From that time on I moved into the great big house of my grand parents, the parents of my mother. The house was so large, that it comprised an entire city block. The windows of my room looked out onto a large square, in the middle of which stood a big black bronze statue of~ our national hero, from 1848, the Independence war, Kossuth. With one hand his sword grasping, the other lay on his breast, swearing and promising something, which later should have been fulfilled by others. At the primary school of the jewish community we were taught, the statue proclaims "We swear that we will never be slaves any more."

The years passed. My father introduced me to a lady, whom I was told to call "Mother" fron now on. I was ten years old at the time and firmly opposed to the idea. What would Mummy have said? This new mother was not Jewish, and even my father himself converted to the catholic faith. He loved her. I could only remain a Jew, since the agreement of both natural parents was necessary in order to convert me and my natural mother was no longer there. In her absence I was asked but denied. Never the less I was accepted in the catholic school that belonged to the Cistertian Order. This secondary school was named after Louis The Great. I was one of the only two Jews in the class, accepted according to the degree of "Numerous Clausus", which severly restricted the number of Jews in educational institutions and places

of work. Two among seventy. The other was Ivan Wallenstein, the son of the chief Rabbi, my best friend. During religious instructions we would leave the class and had a blank "punched hour" in the learning programme.

Our classmates gradually began to give us religious instruction after their own fashion. They made us feel what it meant to be "of a different religion". The great crime the Jews had bought upon themselves was crucifying Jesus. It seemed that they must be right, for not only were the Jews prohibited from learning in school, learning a profession was also forbidden them. Those Jews firmly established in their professions were thrown out of work and our best friends started turning their backs on us.

Sometimes, when I went home to our modest house on the slopes of the hill at twilight, I was attacked by boys, who were strangers to me. They would be waiting at the corner, take my briefcase, knock off my school cap, stuff it in my mouth, beat me up and tear my cloth. On some occasion they covered my head with a rag, threw me on the ground and struck me so hard that I would be lucky to crawl home with a swollen bleeding face and body. My stepmother had to nurse me for days on end while I was bedridden.

My brother, born a Christian through my stepmother, was named Charlie after father. He was unaware of any difference. When we received the fateful telephone call, which begins our story he was three years old.

My father was not branded as a Jew since his wife was an Aryan, and he himself converted to christian fate before 1938. My brother, born in christianity, was not forced to go to the ghetto. Being Jewish was only my privilege and very much so. It was arranged for me by special exemption not to go there too, but I longed to be with my friends,

especially Agi, my beautiful girlfriend with the long black hair and blue eyes. I was in love with her. So I went to the authorities myself and denounced a Jew, who ought to be in the ghetto. This was me!

The invasion of Hungary on the 19th of march 1944 by the German army found me in sixth grade of secondary school. I was sixteen years old.

On Sunday morning, on my way to a regular scouts meeting, German tanks stood blocking my path. In this way I was the first of the family to be informed that the town has been occupied during the night. I turned back and ran home. The Scouts meeting had been postponed. My parents went to the church.

A few days later most of the furniture from my grandmother's private flat in town, that remaining from the "empire" of my late grandfather, was requisitioned by the "Jewish Council", the "Judenrat", on orders from the SS command. We had to drag the pieces ourselves, to the old age home which had been taken over by the Gestapo by throwing out the elderly Jews and evacuated the whole area. How insulting! They converted the building into the luxury headquarters of the "Gestapo", (the German Secrete Police) for their own means of war and pleasure.

The first of the furniture to go, was the large wardrobe from the bedroom. Then the big mahogany cabinet followed by tables and chairs. After this came the articles of value, pictures antiques and jewellery. When there was nothing left of the furniture, the leading Jews themselves were taken away. Among these was my uncle Alexander Roth, of the leather factory.

In order to establish the ghetto a complete area situated near the railway lines was evacuated. The four thousand Jews left in town were taken there. This was after the men between the ages of 18 to 54 had

been taken away to labour camps already in 1942. From most of these, the so called "called to services" nothing had been heard since..

The center of the ghetto was a large building, which had been neglected for years. This contained several hundred rooms, formerly used for railway workers' lodgings. On every floor was attached a long railed corridor, one meter in width with a rusty iron grill on the outside. This balcony, which overlooked the square inner courtyard, was always crowded. Not only did it serve as the passage to all the rooms on the same floor, it was also the connection to the toilet and water faucet.

Every room which was formerly used as a single room served a whole family. There was a permanent queue in front of the tap, as was the case in front of the toilet. The faucets were at the end of each corridor. Surrounding this building on the outside were a number of small houses. Some of these even had gardens.

After two days in this place working units were organized. They were ordered to fetch long wooden poles, to raise a fence so strong and high that we could neither look over it nor through it. At the gates jewish "ghetto policemen" were placed, whose duty was to examine the certificates of those who were permitted to leave for authorized work. Only whole groups with the required certificates were allowed to pass through the gates. They were thoroughly searched on the way and everyone was counted. Some were beaten thoroughly by the hungarian gendarm, who supervised the Jewish police.

Agi, my girlfriend, was lucky. She lived in the less crowded quarters in one of the outer houses. She was fourteen years old at the time and we were head over heels in love. Everywhere we had been going together for the past year, on trips and long long walks in the mountains,

talking and planning. The ghetto didn't change our feelings for each other. For me moving into the ghetto and being with her, was a birthday present.

People passed away like dreams,
Houses flew off on high wings,
I looked down upon the earth
searching for things.

(Sandor Marai)

THE BEGINNING.

The phone rang...My father picked it up. "Hello! You don't say! Good heavens! Come!" That evening we were informed that according to the "Jews orders" called by radio, I must move into the ghetto. My friend, Sanyi Schreiber had already moved there. My father was surprised and desperate. As for myself, I was glad. It doesn't really matter why. I was young, adventurous, sociable and above all in love.

As usual I spent the night in the garden. It was the end of June and already hot. I preferred to sleep outside on my camp bed. I fell almost immediately into a deep sleep. Later, I was awoken by my father who had come to sit by me on my bed and wept under the starlight sky. That was the first time that I heard my father crying. I tried to console him, but my efforts were of no avail. He seemed to have a premonition, a feeling of fateful prophecy in a father's heart. At that time I had no thought except some kind of a notion that I was going to fall apart. However I did not fall apart. Instead I decided to follow my own

decisions, with the same self assurance that typified my personality at times, in an exaggerated form. I was determined, by hook or by crook to face the unknown.

Next day a plain-clothed detective and a policeman came to take me away on a large platform drawn by two horses. At that very moment, an air raid started, so during this time my mother offered them my father's jealously guarded brandy to drink. They became very hearty, promising us everything. A little later I flung my rucksack with my few belongings onto the platform, my mother packed some tasty food for me. I climbed on the platform, and off we went. My mother stood in the door way holding my little baby brother in her arms. The baby waved me farewell with his tiny arm. One of our neighbors, the Arian "Mr. Sch." who was just coming down the hill, secretly smiled to himself. Little did he known that he too would go the same way, under an umbrella carrying his own little package. On the way downhill I met many acquaintances as the truck picked up others on the way. So we stopped at numerous locations all over the city.

Faces! I will never forget those faces. There were whose who looked on us with mild interrest, others angry for some reason, some look away, there were glimpses, quick glances of helpwilling intimidated, some look with bloodthirsty hatred, there were undifferent spectators of some dull performance. As were we chicken to sell on the marketplace. What did they think? I remember familiar, even well known faces among them, family members of my schoolmates, people from our surroundings. Faces of a cruel waxwork.

I suddenly saw my father. He was accompanied by a policeman, for identification. I jumped off the platform, to embrace him for a split second and away he went. I looked back, and saw the policeman closing

his pistolcase. That was the last time I saw him, but this scene imprinted itself upon my memory so clearly, that I saw it for a year and a half. I will always remember it.

I bought two tubes of tooth paste.

We reached the ghetto. Again the vision of my father's figure appeared in front of my eyes. What is happening to him now? Is he still being held I wondered?

In the ghetto I went to my grandmother already there. She lived with my sister, Dudu who was seven years older than me. There I unloaded my packages. My friends: Miki Lobl, Tomy Strenger, and of course, the most important of all, Agi, were there as well. I was happy. Now I would stay here, together with them for ever, that would be no problem.

For a few days it seemed really great. The boy scouts took up all my time. Our group had increased to include the girls' group which had recently been formed. Both my cousin Marika Roth and I became group leaders. I was reluctant to accept the responsibility in that dangerous world. I would be in charge of twelve boys. The scouts prepared a bonfire, and practiced the morse code.

On the evening of 27th of June the leading group had a meeting and we decided to hold a great celebration the following week. We had plans. Everything seemed to be working out just fine. The owercrowded ghetto: the heaven for me.

THE GHETTO.

They are drumming in the ghetto. It is 5.00 in the morning. What's going on? There is much excitement. The drummer stops and announces, "One person from each family is required to appear in the courtyard" .Something is wrong. The wording of the announcement is so strange. But already Dudu's friend, Hedi, is on her way down. We wait. I can feel my heart beating in my throat.

She returns. "Come on! We must go! Everyone may take one change of underwear, some clothes, the shoes on our feet, one bar of soap, one towel, one washing bowl, and a bucket". Nothing else? No paper, pen, not even my lucky penny. The ghetto has to be deserted within three days. I wanted to stay on till the end.

I rushed to Agi's. They had been turned out on to the street within half an hour of the announcement. It was 5 o'clock in the morning. There they were, standing with their parcels, sad but not crying.

From the courtyard of the big apartment building one could hear the sound of screaming and sobbing. "An hysterical lady was being searched". Agi's room had also been turned into a searching centre. I noticed her sweet little jacket, the scout papers and appointments, tossed out of the apartment. I gathered up everything in a hurry in order to burn them.

I picked up her rucksack. It was heavy. How will the child manage to carry it? When she got out of the search room, this was not a problem any more. She was standing there, defenseless, her face burning with shame. I could see that she would have cried bitterly if I hadn't been there. But she restrained herself in my presence. Weren't we both feeling the same way?

We comforted and encouraged each other, knowing fully well that we were fibbing ourselves. But what else could we do? She and her family went away with the first group. They were taken out to the cavalry camp called the Lakics, where they were put in a stable. In the meantime, I remained in the ghetto, deciding to be a "lifesaver".

Here was Ivan Wallenstein, who was my best friend. With him, I could talk over all my problems. He was always helping me. We used to walk together for many miles, among the woods in the vicinity of the town, collecting plants and seeds on the slopes of Mount Mecsek for our botanical collection in the school. We looked on these occasions like hanging gardens, with wet pieces of cloth in our pockets, in order to keep the roots alive whilst the flowers and leaves hanging out of them. This surely made us suspicious in the eyes of passers by.

Now I was sitting in Ivan's room in the ghetto in the middle of it's liquidation, thinking matters over with him. Edith Scher appeared suddenly, dragging me home." Your sister, Dudu wants you urgently," she said.

I ran home, to find my grandmother dying. It was too late. She had already fallen asleep and become unconscious. Our doctor friend, Gyuri Hanak remained by her bedside for a few minutes and than quietly left. On the table I saw the syringe and the broken phial. I knew exactly what happened. I wasn't crying, but the thought kept on recurring in my

mind.

Dudu closed the eye lids and there was the dead body. That's all that was left of our grandma. Old, with cancer, she suffered pain and could not stand any more on her feet.

We packed quickly. I tried to shorten a pair of trousers, in a hurry. I cut one leg with the big scissors, but it didn't work and I left them there. I went from house to house picking up the good quality clothes. There was so much to be had.

Later Dudu also left the ghetto. She marched with a group of fifty other Jews through the gate, and I felt left alone.

Large fires were burning in every courtyard. Scattered money, valuables, prayer books, diaries and useful articles were every where. The toilets were filled with brandy, food and coffee. I tore up articles of clothing and scattered newspaper of the Leftist political party through the rooms. Breaking the lights and everything I was able to destroy. I ate sardines and the chocolate that I found. All the time howling like a baby while Ivan Wallenstein did his best to console me.

I burned my diary, that good friend in which I kept so many thrilling stories. My prayer book and Agi's diary were burnt as well. The latter, or the loss of it hurt me the most, though it is hard for me to explain why.

During the following three days that I remained in the ghetto, mainly in the big apartment building. I cut down suiciders from their ropes and carried the sick on stretchers. I sweated nauseated see so much misery and plain undisguised life. Wherever I went, I saw the traces of human fear, the rush of confused people acting desperately. The parting from their last shreds of property.

Once in the distance I saw our cleaning woman's laughing face. She

always received gifts from grandma. Now she guffawed with joy, in a real animal, hysterical pleasure. She was acting as "search woman". Alas, she had been all the time in the secret service! Her pockets were overwhelmingly full, bulging with round and rectangular objects.

Both Ivan and myself toil sweating under the weight of stretchers. There are others too. M.D. Hanak, Georg Kozma, and many more. All trying to do something to help.

I see the people staring at me as if it isn't real. May be we are part of a film scene!

I am given a red cross arm band entitling me to four bars of soap, and a few aspirins. I managed to remain with Ivan Wallenstein till the last transport. I acted well when I chose Ivan for my friend. He was the best individual among the youngsters, the most faithful, the best of comrades ever had. Poor Ivan.

Now we also, left the ghetto through the gate. The ghetto was almost completely abandoned by then. At the last moment I caught a glimpse of the distorted face of our concierge standing near a distant police car. Her glimpse was gloating, I charged her for it after my returning.

We were escorted by a gendarme officer. Suddenly he shouted: "Jews!" "Down with your luggage!". We stared astonished. Is the beast going to leave us only with the clothing on our backs? "Up, down! Up, down! Bloody dogfaces!" he shouted. This took place apparently because during our stay in the ghetto one of the Jews slapped the face of a man who was behaving in a brutal way towards him unaware that he was a police officer in civilian clothing. We were receiving a collective punishment for a scene that had started when we weren't even there. No exception for the elderly or the ill was taken in the event.

So we went on. A big black cloud loomed in the sky from the north

west just above Mount Jakob. The usual sign of a big storm approaching, as if straight from the direction of a place called Auschwitz. But we, we paid no attention and I held onto Ivan's hand.

The officer had the sick tossed off the cart. We were forced to carry them and their belongings as well. So, amid moans of pain, the little column reached the fortified area of the Lakics cavalry barracks, on the outskirts of the town near the Jewish cemetery. It was after 8 in the evening.

The men were now separated from the women and put up in a big riding hall. The women were sent to the stables. We were all searched again, some were also beaten. But who cared at this stage? I fell asleep immediately just as I was, fully dressed, shoes on, carrying my knapsack. It was around midnight. At sunrise we became aware that the stables were filthy.

The following day a new group arrived. We asked where they come from and they answered "fin Bonyhad". So we called them "Finns". This word "Fin" means "from" in Yiddish, -"von" in german- whilst Bonyhad is the name of a nearby village. This was the first time I heard Yiddish being spoken.

I began to serve as a lifeguard, my task being carrying water to the women. I found the Roth family and later my sister Dudu and Agi and her mother. They had all been separated. I acted as messenger between the women and the men. Since there were only ten lifeguards, we were kept very busy.

The second day we were given some stinking sausage and half a kilogram of bread. This was one day's rations. On the third day, our number increased by so much, that the officer allowed the men to go over to the women's quarters. This made us all happier.

I moved in with my sister and Agi in the stables. But now a new problem arose. There was nothing to eat. So we had to organize stealing. I went alone, because the girls didn't dare come with me. We found ham and bacon, tinned food and rotten fruit. The people who came from Mohacs had been able to bring along whatever they wanted. When they arrived everything was taken from them. It was stacked in the searching building, where among the general confusion we managed to sneak in from time to time.

On the roof window a machine gun kept discipline, as we stood in line in order to wash. The gendarmes remarked "these dirty Jews are always washing". For us the water was a real luxury. There was only one tap in the courtyard. How did the hungarian cavalry manage to wash and water all the horses like this?

THE JOURNEY.

You are bearing a stamp and heavy sentence.

(Sandor Marai)

So it went on till Tuesday. Early in the morning that day, after being organised for roll call, we were separated into groups of 85. Our baggage was loaded into carriages and a large column departed. Each group walking after his carriage.

I found myself guarding the luggage, on the top of a wagon. Being ordered there by the gendarme. The others followed on foot. I still remember Hedi's mother and Agi's grandmother who had to walk all the way leaning upon each other. Oh how they marched! Poor things. Holding the little bag, the "gift package" given to them at the last moment as a "gesture" from the city of Pecs, made up of our own, stolen goods, some cans, sausage, naturally of stinking bacon but of course no bread.

At the station, the luggage was thrown into cattle wagon. For 6 horses or 40 persons was written on the side of these carriages, 85 people were forced into the wagon. Deutsch Ignac called by us "uncle Naci", was elected commander and the carriage was divided into two parts. We were already "comfortably" seated on our baggages, in our part whilst in the other, they were still arranging themselves.

Somebody from outside calls the name of someone in another wagon. He is taken off the train, but someone else takes his place. This poor soul had been arrested that very night, and is put on the train, in our wagon. He had been converted so long ago, that he didn't even know that he was of Jewish origin and begged the officials, to let him go, but this was of no avail. It turned out, that there were

several like him on the train. Perhaps one of their ancestors had been found to be Jewish.

Tuesday, the 4th of July 1944. Nine o'clock in the morning.

Even the insane are brought along. Schnurmacher, the fool, from the madhouse is there, so are the hospital sick. Laci Fekete who has atrophy of the spine, because of a disease. He tried to commit suicide but was saved and brought back to life. He is now among them. Others are brought along in wheel chairs.

So on we go. Cursing the city and its people, who had brought so much trouble on our heads. Who had assisted enthusiastically in bringing us this far.

How lovely it had all been before. When all was beautiful and filled with happiness. When I was a toddler, when my father led me by the hand, the promenade... horse chestnut battles... the old city park keeper... elementary school... initiation into the scouts... summer camp... concerts in the Cistercy order secondary school... the young musicians... Agi... parties... walks... snowfall... the club... corn flower picking... report card... the synagogue courtyard and long walks with my brother. All was gone now!

Here I am closed in the sealed cattle wagon. No room, the air is close. Sweat, thirst, headache, and children crying. Well, we will have to manage somehow!

Someone has to relieve himself. -" Quickly ! Now ! Curtain! Bucket! Out of the window ! Carefully ! We must clear away everything from the floor underneath, or it will start to stink. All right ! Well done! Don't drop the bucket! Don't hold it so! From left to right. Not like that!. It's O.K. It won't spill. Shut your mouth!"- Remarks, nervous suggestions but after all these remarks no one volunteered to empty the bucket. Uncle Naci and I were obliged to do it as always.

No bread! We are hungry. We ate the mouldy first to keep the better till later. In the other half of the carriage someone finds some hidden bread. "Bring it here! Quick! Divide it up!"

So it went for four whole days. Three times we were given fresh water. The doors were slid open, and we were allowed down to a cornfield close to the rails to relieve ourselves. We could all have run away! No one had kept a record of our numbers. But who thought of this at that time? On these occasions the carriage was aired. Then like animals, we are all locked in again. Yet, even if we had run away, we had nowhere to go. We were not trained for these situations. The population like a herd of watchdogs, would probably hand us over to the police. We were afraid.

At Kassa, (Kosice) in Slovakia we are finally taken over by the Gestapo. We are seen off with a shameless beating. A parting gift from the Hungarian gendarmes. From our wagon they beat up Rega Schlesinger, because she had dared to complain that the gendarme had taken her elegant long leather coat. The commander was summoned. " Whose coat is it anyway? " " Schlesinger's" Wham! " Who's? " "Schlesinger's" Wham! Glasses fall off and break. "It's mine!" " I have finished " leered the gendarme.

Poor Rega came back beaten up. So was Uncle Naci, he had no reserve glasses. What will be his fate without them? It was the same story all along the line. The "Hungarian gendarme's farewell". Who knows if it didn't come from "higher orders"?

Once again we had to hand over all our valuables. "If there is something found in the carriage the bunch of you will be executed." The gendarm wanted their loot. There's nothing ? " You may go! "

The Gestapo takes over. Now the door is completely sealed.

An hour earlier Agi and I had been outside, in the hut of a

hungarian speaking slovakian train worker. He had offered to keep us safe until the end of the war. Agi was afraid, "what will happen to uncle Naci?" She said... We returned to the wagon.

July 7th, we cross the border. I will always remember this moment. The train is pulled and pushed by two locomotives and we advance slowly through the seemingly impenetrable cliffs of the Carpathean mountains. The view is breathtaking, monumental. I stand with Agi at the barbed wired "window," pressed close together admiring the beauty exposed to us for first time. The edges of the mountain seemed to be bathed in gold, with the first beams of the rising, radiating sun. An eagle flies past with outstretched wings. Mountains and valleys, the home of happiness still managing to linger on. No barbed wire. Not the whole world locked into cattle trucks. It really hurt! Yet the opposite rails are packed with German military trains, heavily loaded, apparently in a hurry, whilst barrage balloons float overhead.

I still see myself as I tried to clown away my bitter feeling from the other people. Only Agi looks at me, as if to say: Stop the clowning Be yourself! After all you're not a stranger to us!

The stench, filth and hunger keeps growing. The men strip down to their shorts, the women to their slips. In this way we reach Krakow. Yet we continue on. By the roads we see thousands of condemned prisoners at work and soldiers, dressed in red shorts, wearing caps. They rebuild the blown up rails, trying to cure the sick organism of the German military machinery. A sysiphic task. Enormous railroad stations, hit by night. Everywhere, sweating, bowing labourers. Rhythmic orders. The sound of pick axes. The humming of the train wheels. A detour. We see an enormous airplane cemetery. After we pass it the SS claims, we have arrived, soon we will be served with some refreshment!

ARRIVAL.

We are shunted onto a sidetrack and the friendly SS tell us that we have arrived at our destination. At last we will be able to stretch our legs! But the train stand there for three hours. We are dragged ~~into~~ the centre of what seems to be an enormous camp, with wire entanglements and electrified fences with reinforced concrete posts.

It is the night of the 8th of July. That morning we had see well kept barracks, with flower pots on the window sills. A woman beating a carpet. Men eating, children playing. I had no idea what to make of it all! Already I give up the idea that I will fair quite well in this place.

Our train stands beside a ramp, SS soldiers are standing with big german hounds held by a leash every ten meters. An SS officer makes promenade up and down. Suddenly the doors are flung open. Shouting everywhere, "Raus! Raus! Alles raus!" ("Out! Out! All out!"). Strange looking convict like agitated people appear as if from no where. They try to hurry us up. "Don't worry about your baggage, that will be delt with later!"

So we are dragged off. The strangely stripped uniforms, an until inhumanity intimidated, frightened looking bunch of clowns pulled my people out of the carriages. Shouting and hurrying about their business. As if to slit his throat, one of them makes a sign with his

finger. As if warning us, goodwillingly, smiling. "What a foul joke!" "One of these creatures is trying to frighten me!" A woman even complains to the guard about this behaviour. The SS asks about the "joker", who disappeared. They throw out our baggage, onto a heap which then tossed onto trucks.

Suddenly we hear an even louder commotion. Beside the next carriage, like bales of hay, an enormous pile of people is building up. The unconscious, exhausted and the dead. I see Imre Gyenes, father of one of my good friends, among them. I find that his pulse is still beating. "Los! Los!" ("Let go! Let Go!"). Whip of an SS brings me to my senses. I left him there. What could I do? This scene repeated itself in front of every carriage. The relatives being chased away from the human piles.

Now the most inhuman of it all. The families are divided up. Men and women separated from each other. "To the showers!" an uniformed man shouts. "Don't worry you will all be together again by evening." His eyes gleam mysteriously. What does he know, and hide from us?

The sudden blinding light of a command car's headlights so confuses me, that I can't even say good bye to Dudu and frightened Agi. They look after me throwing me kisses. The wind blows Agis long hair. The SS whip separates us. Sometimes one makes involuntary snapshots in the depths of the soul. For a lifetime, this will be such a photo. Dudu and Agi disappear in the crowd for ever.

Now I am alone, in the crowd.

Mr. Loebl pickes up every usable object he can lay his hand on. Camp chair, cups, mess tins. He is sorry when he has to leave his treasure behind.

We march in front of the headlights of an other military vehicle, where an elegant SS officer grins at us. Directing people to right and

to the left. Mr.Loebl to the right. His son, Miki and myself, to the left. Tibi Krauss, is a sort of relation of mine, we swore to stay together, for better or worse. Tibi Krauss's father went to the right.

Here comes Jancsi Gyenes, with his father, who I had seen lying on the pile. He has somehow been revived. This poor enormous, handsome man seemly has lost his mind. He takes off his pants and throws them away. He is forced to put them back on. Then he wants to take an other man's pants claiming them for his own.

My friends, Robi Bricht, Joska Krauss, Pali Weisz, the scouts are there. The "Falcons", Tomi Strenger, Jancsi Stellner, Miki lobl, Ivan Wallenstein, Thomas Ronai, Andrew Kozma, are also together. Oscar Weisz joins us later.

Sanyi Schlesinger had been taken off the train, for he and Sanyi Schreiber were allowed to remain at home. Schreiber's mother had been divorced. The husband of her second marriage, an Arian had adopted him. It was his privilege to stay behind. I had been able to take advantage of this same privilege. Yet denounced the Jew, who had not been taken to the ghetto and chose this destination instead.

The "Swallow" group of youngsters, Lustig Laci, Burger Laci, were missing. The column moves. Some familiar some unknown, we are all brothers now.

After these trenches we saw a frightening building. Large flames, 5 metres high, oily bubbles leap from an enormous chimney erected on the huge windowless building. "This is where the rags are burnt." says someone... So many rags? We pass another sea of flames. On the other side of a fifty meter wide grove I can see through the trees a big fire, burning in a long wide trench. We see silouettes of men arranging some objects with long bars, in the fire. I was unable to identify, the objects. What are they burning this time? The belongings of the dead?

May be the dead themselves, or t
hose whom the big house could not contain?

Now we find ourselves in the bathhouse. A deformed faced man, speaking in a strange tongue orders us to strip completely. What a queer sight to see. The leaders of our community naked, as the day that they were born.

Suddenly we are rushed upon from all sides. All our hair is shaven off. Scalps, armpits, even my eyebrows are left naked. In a wisp, all the barbers vanish as suddenly as they came and the distorted faced man points to the open door.

The bath contains several hundred people. We are given a cold shower. All we are left with is a pair of shoes and a belt. What a way to start! The shoes are dipped into some kind of liquid in a pool behind the door. We pass through this as well. All wet we have to run in a line. As if on an assembly belt we receive our new rags, the Haeftling Anzug (Prison clothes) on german soil. A pair of thin striped trousers, made of ticking, a small jacket made from the same sackcloth, one pair of socks, or rather a piece of rolled up rag fulfilling the function of socks and a kind of cap. Some people get some underwear, others are not so lucky.

We are beaten whilst rushing about all the time. I manage to put on my "clothes" at a fast trot. Trousers big enough for six of us, the jacket appears to be too tight. I could not have buttoned it up anyway for lack of buttons. I try my cap it disintegrates in my hand.

I manage to keep my shoes by tying my trousers on to them. I owe my shoes to this trick. These boots, the precious waterproof Bilger boots with their iron nails my father made for me, eventually saved my life. Ivan Wallenstein is not so lucky. His boots are taken away and he is given some torn pointed shoes.

So "dressed" we run past the open door of the woman's bath. Where SS henchmen are lustfully strolling among the naked women, flipping their riding sticks. I slowly become aware of what kind damned place we are in. One must endure it all. I promised myself and Them that I would endure it. Let God help Them to do so the same!

We run past a mountain of beautiful, shining, well groomed female hair. A pile of combs, I see one that looks familiar to me. Or is it only imagination? I slap Sanyi Holczer's back so hard that he ran on so fast that I can barely keep up with him. He probably thought that it was an SS, who hit him in such a way.

We pass a long corridor which houses the disinfectant rooms and finally we stop in a hall. There are only under 16's among us now and I profess myself to be one of them.

Here I see some creatures, whom I can only identify as women by their bare breasts, and their skirts. I never saw bald women. Bald, dressed like us, but even worse. Some in a slip, others in torn, filthy skirts, some half naked. They look very weird without their hair. Only now I can understand: The beautiful, well groomed, cherished hair had been left lying in the cutting room.

I hardly recognize Dudu, my own sister. She called over that Agi was still in the "bath". I reply that I noticed this. Aunt Lenke, Agi's mother, said nothing, just turning her back ashamed. The only ones who should be ashamed are the "Herrenvolk" ("The mastering nation"), but they don't care a dam. The women are led away and so are we. We apparently met by mistake. We also missed this opportunity.

One o'clock in the morning. We don't know any more whether it is day or night. Whether we are boys or girls.

Our small group of 30, all that remains of the Jewish youth of Pecs. The Jewish youth march into the most famous most terrible Camp of

Birkenau, the so called Gypsy camp.

We are led into block number 5, where the supervisor warns us to give up any valuables we might possess. Because we are to be brought in front of an "apparatus". This apparatus can detect such objects. We may ask for a pair of pliers to extract valuables if need be, even from our shoes. If someone is discovered carrying gold concealed on his person, he will be hanged. "Just this morning, four people were swinging in the wind. Poor devils." Weisz said. There is some commotion, some people among them uncle Schreiber, Sanyis father ask for the plier and give up their only valuables, by tearing up their shoe heel. I gave him my little aluminium ring, which I have been wearing for luck and kept until now. The only keep sake remaining from my Agi. I handed it over only to learn half an hour later that the whole thing was a revolting, mean evil lie invented by Weiss in order to exploit us and take away our life meaning waluables..

Mr.Weisz, a Viennese cattle dealer, so they say, is a fat scoundrel, and a Jewish traitor. He robbed his Jewish brethren of valuables which could have brought them life and lots of food. He eyes the diamonds casually, indifferently shoving them into his pocket.

Now it is the turn of the clerks or "Schreiber"s, and everyone's personal data is recorded, as if this matters. We are taken to the main office of the camp, placed in one of those barracks near the front gate and the kitchen. There we have to line up and fill out forms which contain all sorts of questions about ourselves, including education, the work we did and so forth. This takes about twenty minutes standing beside a counter in groups of ten.

I suddenly hear a suspicious sound beginning from the opposite side of the thin wooden wall, containing this counter. I had heard a similar noise at school when I was being "X" rayed. I realize, we are being "X"

rayed now, perhaps even made impotent. My panic ceases in a fraction of a minute, when I realize what to do. I write something hastily to every question on the form, claiming myself to be one year older since I suspect that the under 16s are being "done away with" and am on the second page when the buzzing of the machine begins.

I finish my work in a few seconds, and leave the counter. The clerk looks at me suspiciously but doesn't say a word. Face flushed I hurry out and join those who have finished with the procedure in the preceding groups. Afraid to speak out, about my own suspicion.

We are then given post cards to fill up, to assure our friends at home that we are well. These cards are to be filled in a specific way according to a strict order. We fill them up willingly, grateful that at least our acquaintances would know that we are still alive. In spite of the limitation of a chance to pass on information, we slipped in the names of "Kato" and "Wica" on several cards. Hoping that our friends would understand that we are now near the Polish town of Katowice. We later discovered that the cards were received but the message not understood. The postal address of the sender had to be written as a far away holiday resorts called "Am Waldsee".

Fat Weisz tells us that we are in a 42 square km. camp, one of the so called "KL-s" (concentration camps). Life doesn't matter here. 1000 people more or less are all the same. No one has a name any more. Everyone's name and family tree, is reduced to a cold prison number. No more brothers, no more relatives. We are all reduced to Haftlings (prisoners). He who is stupid enough to claim someone to be his brother would surely be separated from him his kin.

The gipsies keep pointing at the big flame, telling us that we will all end up there. I remember the misterious glimpse of the SS saying "at evening you will be all together again!" Alas! this is where the

parents, children, and brothers are burnt. Those who are above 50 and those who are under 15 years. They all went up as smoke in the flames. In through the wide gates, out through the chimney. The gasping hungry gas chambers. There they all went never to be seen again.

I kept on seeing in the smoke and flames old Omi, Agi's grandma, Miki Loebl's father and dear old uncle Krausz who is now following his son, whom he had buried a year before. Dudu spared Grandma this fate. How fortunate Grandma had been!

I also think of what had happened to myself, to my brothers and Agi. Then, for the first time in years I break down crying. I have mystical visions of my mother who had died 14 years before and of my grandmother. I am certain that this lasts no more than a few seconds. Just a short confusion of senses. I wake up from my reverie to feel Ivan Rado shaking me. My cap is very wet, I had used it as a handkerchief. Luckily I managed to receive another since it is a compulsory object for the "Appell" or roll call. I am back again.

This is the last time I cried in Auschwitz. Old men and young boys did this often, hysterically unable to keep back their pain, of which there is so much. I managed to restrain myself though sometimes it would have felt so good to have a cry. I knew, that once I started I could not have stopped. I hardened my nerves thoroughly. This saved me. Almost all those who came back from there had to do the same.

LIVING IN AUSCHWITZ.

After being robbed of everything, we are taken to the barracks at a trot. The adults to block 13, the under 16 year old to 11, the so called children's block. The situation there is desperate. Staggering around half dead, we don't dare to go anywhere. Not even to the "toilet". We have lost all our strength as a result of the hardships we endured during the long journey and especially as a result of the great pain of being torn away from our women folk. The shock of seeing those great flames and having to say farewell to those who had gone in that direction. Some of us managed to retain his senses, many lost these as well. These, then bore their lot, like a herd of cattle.

Three o'clock in the afternoon. We line up for counting. In our block there are 240 occupants, standing stifly to attention in close packed rows. In ranks of five with a slight gap after every 100 people. It is a slow process. The SS man pass slowly along the line, counting each five. We wait till they have finished checking and counting the entire camp of 32 blocks. Many are tempted to sit down, since at this time, between 2 and 6 in the afternoon the sun is parching hot. Who ever dares as much as to stand at ease is cruelly beaten, by the baton of our sadistic section commander called Feri. This is how Feri is rewarded with good food and earns his bread. Many fall down. They can't bear it any more. Water is brought along and poured over them to

bring them round. So it goes on. Drinking is forbidden.

We learn that this occurs day after day. In the other blocks, where the older people are kept, the situation is the same.

Feri becomes a concept in the 11th block. Short, very thin, about 20 years old, with an arrogant attitude, he somehow had "made it" with Mr.Weisz as "orderly", assistant manager of block affairs. The affairs have mostly to do with matters of food, such as, fetching provisions from the kitchen and the using of his initiative to cunningly manage the distribution to ensure that the required amount will be left for bargaining as well. These specialities were the sly tricks of management which he invented. He determines the size of the bread portions and of the "side dishes", such as cheese, jam, sausage or margarine. At each bread distribution, that is once a day, the kitchen gives out two "side dishes" of about 4-500 calories to each portion. This has to be distributed and Feri is the master distributer.

Feri's duties include putting the "rabble" in bed and lining them up for inspection. In order to undertake his duty all he has at his disposal is a club, his barking voice, and a sharp tongue. He manages in this way to convey to us by hints and beatings, the new language which Jewish boys of every mother tongue are taught. Taught in a matter of days, nay, of hours. Whether they like it or not. This international language is Feri's Esperanto. He wealds his club and his tongue with the same agility in the service of his limited intelligence and for the sake of the sacred cause called discipline. His club is always covered with blood and hair. In the block there remained only one person with a name, the "mangy dog" called Feri. Emperor, ruler, the master of life and death and servant to Mr. Weisz.

Mr.Weisz does not deal with such down to earth matters, he is a busy sorter of diamonds and has to explain the "apparatus" story to

newcomers. Mr.Weisz is the commander of the barracks. He belongs to the class of camp administrators who have almost equal status to the Germans. He is a master prisoner in a meticulously pressed stripped uniform ironed by Feri. The "Prominent", one of the outstanding tribe of trustie's, who cunningly help their superiors, the SS in running the camp.

After inspection Feri says something, upon which it seems that every one, especially those from the Maramarosh district start pushing and shuffing. We don't know what is going on. The Marmarosh who had arrived a few weeks before us, seemed to be familiar with this sort of thing. Feri set up a line and it seems, they all want to be in it. Those who are apparently successful march away. Some time later I see them carrying some kind of white bricks. I have never seen such a thing before. Well, they too have had it I thought. But it turned out, that this is the bread which looks like that over here.

We stand and wait. The happy bread carriers return with bulging pockets. They had collected the remains of the bread crumbs which had been left in the store room. The others stood around them. Whenever a crumb dropped, ten boys jumped to pick it up. The onlookers stared hungrily at their munching jaws. Rather than swallow it all at once, they joyfully and lingeringly toy with it in their mouth, eating it crumb by crumb. I am disgusted and feel like slapping them on the face. But I can't.

I think to myself, these people had been starving for a long time. Will I become like them one day? The thought frighten me. I picture myself like them. It seems terrible. They, our beloved, those of them that are still alive, will they become so hungry as well? I don't dare continue with these thoughts and can't in any case, because we have to line up again.

Now everyone rushes to be first in line. A bloody fight, just like before. Feri beats the whole company. Hitting out wherever he is able reach someone. Shrieking and laughing hysterically all the time. It is an ugly sight.

We have been standing for quite a while now and it is getting cooler. The sun sets and suddenly it becomes so cold that we almost freeze to death. We are still standing in line shivering, until some hours later, at 9 o'clock, the line at last starts moving slowly and we return to the block.

We have to pass by a window near the entrance to the barrack. This is where our bread and margarine portions are handed out. Each portion was supposed to be one quarter of a loaf, but it was much smaller. Why? Because the block supervisor steals. He steals a lot. Stealing our bread. He cut each loaf in two, making one part 2/5 of the others. Then he compared the 2/5 to the remaining 3/5 and again cut off the difference. Then he put the two halves together again, keeping the middle 1/5 to himself. Afterwards he divided each so called half loaf into two equal pieces and distributed the trimmed down portions. After each 20 portions he has a whole loaf to himself. This is how the Blockaltester (block elder) steals. This is how he buys himself brandy and other delicacies. He lives like a lord in the midst of the starving crowd.

By executing the technique of "organizing" the food business, Ferike kept pushing himself forward till he became "vertreter" (deputy). Then he was satisfied with himself. These technicians used similar methods to steal margarine, only in this case they simply cut off a large chunk of the slab and divided up the remainder. They poured water into the jam and measured it out with tea spoons.

We go in through the front of the barrack and are not allowed to

leave again, in order to prevent us from joining the food line twice. Only when the food distribution is over, are we allowed to go out. Many inmates now go to other blocks to try and stand in another food line. Such an offender if caught was lucky to be alive after his beating.

Next morning, at about 4 o'clock, we are rudely woken up and chased outside. The night is starry. The moon still high up, in the sky. We are shivering with cold. We lean our back to the wall of the barrack and press together so tightly that we can hardly breath, in order to somehow reduce the torture of this cold. Some ran off to other blocks to acquaintances there or stamped their feet and jumped about like madmen trying to keep warm in the cold.

Only the privileged are allowed to stay indoors. Among these are the orderlies. Who clean the supervisers boots and help him steal. They are rewarded with some of the pickings.

The twins are also given special privileges. The SS doctor Mengele is experimenting on them, obsessed to produce twins artificially. In order to do this he takes their blood samples and examines various parts of their bodies. Torturing them but giving them all the food they need. In addition Korda Jancsi from Mihajlovce, the interpreter who speaks Polish is also privileged. He is Rado Ivan's good friend so he "organized" us some sweet oat flakes.

Further on the special list of "Prominents" are the section commanders called the "Kapos". A name deriving from the German Kameraden-Polizei. These are a devilish invention, an example of the highly gifted German genius as organizers. Chosen as Arians, genuine Germans, for some reason to be in the Lager, as punishment (kommunist, murderers, homosexuals, deserters, antisocial individuals, or simply homeless vagabounds,) But also few chosen at random from among the rabble, or on account of their fearful appearance, or "smoothy"

types. Each provided with the luxuries of good food for their services. In return they are handed an iron club or whip and are expected to be ready to beat their own brother or father to death. Many morally insane persons volunteered for such a "good" job. The extreme starvation made people capable of everything. Only those with the finest capacity for beating were permanently employed for the task. The others are dismissed as unsatisfactory.

There were very few Kapos who didn't beat their own inmates. Though there were some notable exceptions.

You are nowhere and if you are – how few of you.

(Sandor Marai).

WHERE ARE YOU?

Our second day. Tivadar Steiner comes over from the adult barrack the 13th, to the rear of the block. Secretly, he informs us: the boys from Pecs in Block no. 13 are leaving the next day with a transport. These transports recruited labourers to be sent to other concentration camps. Ivan Wallenstein, Saci Lukacs, and the majority of the boys who were left of the scouts, all my friends, professed themselves over 16 years of age. Did we want to go with them? We, Miki Lobl, Andris Kozma, Tomy Strenger, Tomy Ronai, Oszi Weisz, Robi Bricht, Ivan Rado, Sanyi Holczer, Ivan Blum, Jancsi Korda, Pali Weiss, Tomi Berger, Jancsi Krausz, Feri Groak and another five or six boys from Pecs, decide not to go to a labour camp, as long as we can stay here without working. Anyway, we would not get more food even if we did go with them. If we had really wanted to, we could have sneaked over to the other block, and stay in line for registration, but we want to stay. On the second day they were taken away. (There was no one left to herald their fate.)

After we are turned out from the barracks the privileged "clearers" started to clean the block. They take up the boards on which we sleep then sweep and scrub the concrete floor.

About 25-30 inmates are selected to go to the kitchen to wait outside for hours in the cold until they can fetch the "coffee". This is a suspicious looking dark liquid, but at least it is hot, and may warm us a little. Ten or twenty of us combine our coffee ration into a large washbasin and wash ourselves in the hot liquid. "Breakfast" over we lie down under the scorching sun to wait for "lunch".

Lunch is served in the same style, but even in a less orderly manner. We are given some disgusting dish water like, soup, "the Doergemuese". People fight over it as always and the Kapos do their "work" on them.

All this hardly bothers us now. We are too concerned about appeasing our hunger! A few beatings some good swings, one two three and the food fetching "commando" is set up. They go to the kitchen where after standing there a long time they can take advantage of the opportunity of inquiring about their relatives. Then they come back carrying the undeterminable mush in large wooden barrels. Each supported by means of two long wooden sticks put under the iron handles on each side of the barrel. Eight people carry one barrel, each of which contains over sixty litres, holding each stick two from ahead, two from behind.

The barrels are dragged along the Lagerstrasse (main road of the camp) escorted by a crowd of Haftlings. Who ever can steal some of the soup, does so. Then begins the daily battle over who is to be the first to be served, in order to be rewarded by the skim containing the "fat" of the soup. Each block is given its own daily portion and divides it up individually. Even this act lasted a long time. As as many as 600 to 700 people are involved per block.

Distribution takes place at one place only at a time in each Block. The "cook" serves out half ladle litre sized portions. There is always

a fight, as to who is to be served -the last. The "cook" restores some form of "peace" with his ladle as he stands among the 4 or 5 barrels placed side by side. Those Haeftlings who were served are kept aside and separated from the others by a rope so that they can not stand in line again. Again some inmates are privileged. They may be allowed to join the line twice, or cross the rope that separates us.

At first I was amazed at the small number of utensils serving such a large crowd. But I soon figured it out. There are in fact a large variety of utensils, of all sorts and sizes, large 10 liter basins, mess tins, baking trays, chamber pots, round and oval plates and mixing bowls.

We have no spoon, so we carve out all kinds of sticks to serve as "spoons". But not everyone could afford the luxury of even having this so called spoon. If someone has a large utensil, lots are drawn as to the order of drinking. It is no small matter, as to who comes first. One can't drink just after anybody. Only after the procedure had been decided on, could the "eating" begin. Now everyone, according to his turn, is allowed to take 8-10 sips of the liquid, remembering the spot he has drunk from and using that same spot on his next time round. This carries on as long as the food lasts. Since at the end the soup becomes thicker, having a spoon was of crucial importance. This ensure the possibility of scraping out the mush.

I receive my food in a large basin. Together with 15 boys we stand around it and each of us take 4-5 sips of the filthy, saltless, fatless, disgusting liquid. When everyone has taken a certain number of gulps of it, we start all over again. Eagerly we try to remember the exact spot on the edge of the basin...

The role of a food distributor "Verteiler" is very important. If he

ladled out your portion from the top of the barrel, your "lunch" consists of nothing but salty water, except if you are lucky to catch a peece of skim. And there is a certain risk in it, if you are the first on the line. If he dips the ladle deep down, he comes up with the thicker contents. The "ideal Soup",the bottom part, belonged to the block commander, the Blockaelteste. This part contains potatoes and vegetables, that is why we call it "fat soup". A spoon can rest standing up in it. When the barrel is 3/4 empty, a decent Verteiler may pour the remainder into the next barrel and continue dispersing the soup. No one wants to be at the beginning of the line when soup is being first served, except the very first one, who risks his daily food, for at that stage it can be very watery.

Lunch is one of the highlights of the day. The SS who sometimes supervised soup distribution, couldn't understand why inmates are reluctant to stand at the head of the food line. At such times the SS guards would help the Kapos wielding their thick bamboo sticks to form the line and urge the hungry to get some food. They keep shouting, "Wollt ihr fressen?" ("Do you want to eat?") Of course we did! But no one wanted to be the first to be served. They all wanted the thick sediment that was on the bottom of the barrel served to the last comers.

After lunch we lay down again or rather collapsed and belched. The "food" was made of potato peels, muddy cabbage leaves and God only knows what other garbage. Sometimes, however, very seldom, it accidentally contained potatoes.

Our third day in the camp. Almost all the people from Pecs have gone. The remainder including even the doctors, followed on the fourth day. Later on that same day there is a great commotion. Kapos rush to the large latrine and beat everyone out of their place. They catch many people there. I am caught too.

We are all scared. What ill fortune will be fall us now? We stagger out as if in a stupor. Side by side, we are marched under an armed guard, in rows of five beyond the wire fences. It turns out we are to be employed for brick carrying and don't go very far, but it is enough too to wear us out. That is the last time that we see Gyuri Korda, pulling a cart along with Bandi Ostreicher and Gyurka Tolnai. In another camp we see Ivan Wallenstein, Saci Lukacs and Dezso Kozma, Andris's father.

We return to our camp. Andris Kozma is weeping. Miki Loebl is crying about his father. We tried to comfort them and make them believe that they would probably fare better where they are? Very few from home are left in the large crowd, among them is Gyula Schreiber the timber merchant, my friend Sanyi's father, who gave away his brilliant stones to Weiss-bacsi. Sanyi is not here because he was allowed go away from train in Pecs. Dr.Kellermann and his son Pista, another friend, Dr.Gyurka Hanak and Dr.Leo Fodor as well as dentist Dr.Kempfner, who worked at the "Hospital" are still here. To the list may be added Dr.Krauss and his son Jancsi, Karcsi Laszlo, and Dr.Vilmos Schwarz. We are joined by Ivan Blum the young 14 year old musician, who had his own compositions played by orchestras in the city of Pecs and Gabi Worthmann and a few more boys from our town and its surroundings. These are all who are left of the 4500 Jews from Pecs. But a new transport arrives, from the Sarvar collecting camp in central Hungary.

The climate is very extreme. At dawn we jog up and down since the earth is silvered by ice. By noon it has all melted and we get stuck in the mud. This later dries up and hardens like stone. Frost and haze set in by evening, when it freezes again and then we stumble along falling on our own hardened footprints in the mud.

In the mornings we flee into the waschraum (shower, -three long tin washbasins with waterpipes, hanging from the ceiling on wires, always dripping taps), to shelter from the bitter cold. At such times there are many thousands of Haftlings(prisoners) crowded in the barrack. Naturally we did not wash or our hands would have frozen in the icy water. At 6 o'clock the Kapo entered the dark interior and chased everyone out from there with his iron club. The crowd would be rushed out of the washroom, raving, treading on one another.

Whoever could, sneaked into the toilets. The situation there was much the same. The toilets consisted of three elevated concrete platforms with holes. Even on the platforms themselves people crowded together, there was no room left anywhere else. It is pitch dark in there and friends look for each other calling out one another's names until the Kapo arrives, repeating his performance as in the washroom.. Now everyone falls silent and the place seems deserted as a morgue.

Ten o'clock. We strip half dead from the heat. The washroom, with three rows of taps over a ditch, fills up again. Hundreds of inmates hanging on the faucets and lying underneath them. Many cannot resist the temptation to drink. Having not been sufficiently chlorinated and our natural resistance to infection being weakened. This often results in diarrhea, and proves to be their undoing. Tomi Strenger falls a victim. He drank after having previously had a lung infection which left him debilitated. He didn't wash his pants properly. Poor Tomi

stank from afar. Everyone became disgusted with him. Since he wouldn't wash in spite of the fact that we tried to persuade him to do so and shouted at him. Eventually, when we noticed his nose dripping in the common food bowl, he was expelled from our company and even expelled from the food routine. We only gave him his share to eat when we had finished our portions. However, we never touched any of his ration, which we left for him. We on the contrary tried to feed him as best we could, but it was of no avail. We all knew and even he himself felt, that his end was coming. He was taken to the "hospital". There they took away his shoes and he was given some Dutch wooden clogs which blistered his feet and caused him to limp about. Thinned down to skeletal dimensions, he became a so called "Musselman". His head, a skin coated skull balanced thrown on his neck, all his bones could be counted from afar. Transferred to the death block after one of the selections he was taken away.

Uncle Schreiber, Sanyi's father, also falls victim to diarrhea. He fights for his life and fasts for two days, hoping he will get better, but his condition doesn't improve. He sold his soup on both of his fast days for half a portion of bread. Having his own bread left over from the two days, on the third day he had four portions of bread. He was finally able to eat a large amount with the hope of blocking his diarrhea. By this time he had become so thin that he could hardly walk. We try to help him and gave him some more bread. Miki gave half a portion I did likewise. The others too added a few slices each. Tomi Ronai worked at that time in the kitchen and he managed to steal for him some canned milk, but all this was of no avail. Uncle Schreiber was selected.

It appears that everyone is in the washroom, but even more are in

the toilet. Here we listen to the "news". A new rumor is spreading every day, "The Russians are in Kracow, already". "The SS will run away in a week". "The crematorium has been blown up". "The English are marching on Berlin". "In a week we shall all be free", etc. We found new strength in these rumors. We had new dreams and our confidence rose. Gabi Wortman invites us to a party. Ivan promises to give everyone a gold bracelet, Miki Loebl and I just smile at this suggestion. News become more and more certain: "A newspaper has been found in hospital", "one can rely on that." "This news comes from a dependable source." "from well informed circles." " based on absolutely trustworthy information." "Completely free from doubt". It went on like this, week after week, month after month. The news came mostly from the "hospital" and spread to our meeting place in the latrines.

There are some great institutions in Birkenau, a swimming pool, a football pitch, a flower garden and an orchestra. This German K.L. (Concentration Camp) is a swell place indeed! At 6 in the morning a brass band plays brisk marches in the D. camp and thousands march to these tunes to their bitter slave labour. They push the carts from dawn to dusk with a single 30 minute break, sweating, groaning, under their load. Always hungry, yet the music is played. Music can be heard in the Buna factory as well. Here slaves are also working. There is music in all the other large German camps. Music, music everywhere! Sometimes the crematorium transports also marches to their death to the tunes of the same music. They receive a musical farewell before marching through the gaping gates of the gas chambers swallowed up by the ever hungry throat of death. Music playing to wipe out the screams and shrieks. The pleas for help from the condemned. Above the sound of whistles, drums and trumpets six million sing the song of martyrs! So much! So much!

So much! Music every where!

We also have a hospital. World famous deported physicians and professors, from the universities of Prague, Berlin. Dutch and Belgian doctors. X rays, neat, clean equipment. White bread, sweet oatflakes. Captain Mengele the chief doctor would hold one selection in the hospital and whoops, there were no more patients left. All underwent the "special treatment". "Helped over", -cynically murdered! How many times was this repeated?

There is a flower garden in front of the kitchen. Beautiful pansies and forget-me-nots. But if one flower died, it cost the gardener his life. No fallen leaf is allowed because this is the land of the beautiful death.

The swimming pool near the kitchen. Whoever dared approach the kitchen beyond its corner, was thrown into it and kept under water as

sur.long as he was kicking. At the very best, if he was lucky, he would only faint and be pulled out alive again.

In the neighboring camp, the twins are being tortured with injections and medical experiments. Most of them paid with their lives. Many people went out of their minds with pain.

Then there is the football pitch. This is where Kapos, block supervisers, the murderers and similar gentlemen kicked a ball. Rewarded for their good behaviour. Serving the Dominant Race, the "Herrenrasse" in practicing the final solution of the Jewish problem.

"EINE LAUS:DEIN TOD."

Today the whole camp is in commotion again. Small affairs are blown up to impossible proportions, as is usual. "Eine Laus:dein Tod." ("One louse: your dead.") This inscription is painted on the wall of the barrack, above the entrance. On one of the inspections a louse is found. One single louse. It is sealed in a bottle and put on display. Most of us had not seen such a creature before. People became hysterical, panic, fear of typhoid fever. They demand to have all their clothes burned and be given new ones. Afraid that death could come within a few days. The SS guards are also effected by the panic. Even they begin to fear for their lives.

The inmates are taken in groups of 100 to be disinfected. The work continues day and night. Those already disinfected are transferred into newly disinfected blocks and forbidden to communicate with the others.

At 9 o'clock in the evening, it is the turn of our group. We are stripped naked and lined up on the inspection ground near the Entlausung (delousing block). Meanwhile in the disinfecting building the previous group is being taken care of.

It is freezing cold with ice on the ground. We are shivering, stamping our feet, snuggling closely together for warmth. Stark naked except for the shoes on our feet. Someone is seized with convulsions, numb with cold. He is called in first to be disinfected. Suddenly

everyone gets these convulsions. This annoys the SS, who had had enough from the lousy jews. They order us to do some "exercises". Some sport indeed, if anyone should care to give it such a gamelike name! A thousand men lean to the bones, or sick, squatting with shaking arms held horizontally forward half squatting, suffering in all sorts of ungainly positions in the icy cold. Every breath comes out in steam, like little silvery clouds in the light of the moon.

This went on for two hours, till at last it is our turn to be chased inside into the showers. Everyone is given a bar of the "R.J.F." soap, "Rein Juden Fet" ("thoroughly Jewish Fat"), "directly from the crematorium" -says the christian Kapo.. We had been so happy in anticipation of the hot shower, no such thing! We find there is no water there.

Suddenly the water comes. Ice cold! Our frozen limbs are douched with icy water! Many broke out crying, moaning. I stand next to the wall and manage to avoid the first burst of cold water. Many tried to do the same, but eventually everyone gets wet. Suddenly it becomes boiling hot, alternates hot and cold for a few minutes, and stops flowing altogether.

We wipe ourselves as best we can, rubbing ourselves vigorously lest our lungs be affected. We are chased out again whilst still wet. Only after being given back our clothes, warm from disinfection, can the Kapos no longer savour the joy of making sport of this frozen, crying in desperation, group of unfortunates.

At 24 o'clock we return to the block, where our dearly beloved Feri awaits us with his club. "Lie down, you rotten dogs!" He mentions all the bad qualities of our mothers, as well as the source of their income. He even fixed the price at "five". This was no news for us,

since he had enlightened us about this on several previous occasions. His information was clear and unequivocal, each syllable punctuated with blows from his belt, only the price is sometimes different. So Ferike gives the company a warm welcome and put our "mangy gang" to "sweet sleep". At last he put down his club, gives his tongue a rest and goes out.

The entlausung (delousing) was finally over. Day breaks, dawn. The frozen mud thawed out from our clothes and the burning sun quickly dried it up. On account of the lengthy business of disinfection, the previous day we had not been given any bread and are now very hungry. A whole day's portion of bread has simply been lost.

We are now one thousand and five hundred in a barrack with a capacity of no more than two hundred and fifty men. Lying pressed together like sardines. One's toe gets into the other's mouth upon which the latter bits it to indicate the mistake. There upon the foot draws away from the mouth, hangs in the air for a while and lands on the same face again. Now it is all right, since the owner of the face has meanwhile fallen fast asleep. My face rest on Miki's foot. Miki likes this, at least it keeps the cold away from his foot. Andris folds his knees and lays them where my stomach has been. Although considerably shrunk I can still feel it. What else can we do? More comfortable at the Ritz no doubt! By morning all tangled up, painful groans announce the awaking and attempt to rise. Someone lying on my arm draws his foot out of someone else's throat, thereby nearly breaking my arm.

Ivan fingers for the bread in his pocket, in vain. It has been stolen. I curse, wishing all the thief's family to go to hell. Can there be a worse place than the one we are in now? People keep on stealing, although this is forbidden. Only Germans and Gypsies can

allow themselves to act in such a way. We do not disapprove of the "organize" (planned pinching). Everyone could do it so, even the most spoiled offspring of the noblest family. Anyone stingy enough to save his bread, to delight in its sight, deserved to have it "organized". My food was also organized more than once, I swore at the time and forgot about it afterwards, yet I myself also planned to steal. Once, in the middle of the night, noticing the tailors had a whole loaf of bread under their heads, I put a brick wrapped in paper there instead. I "pinched" the bread skillfully at night without waking them up. I had discovered their secret earlier by chance, on my way to the big piss barrel standing at the end of the barrack. This barrel was always overflowing. I stumbled over the thousands of sleeping bodies to do my trick. Had I been seen by only one of them, my luck would have been up. On my way back to my place, everyone possibly would think I was just back from a leak. That night I woke up Ivan Rado and Egon Lowi, we cut the bread up and ate it on the spot. The privileged tailors did not say a word, but they stopped putting bread under their heads.

It was at about this time that one of the boys wanted to hand a small parcel to his father in the other camp. He saved some bread and wrapped it in paper since the mud was so deep, that he feared the great treasure would become inedible if it fell to the ground. He tried to hand it over between the wires. Inadvertently he touched the wires and although he died instantly when he stuck to the electrified fence, his body remained twitching. The twitching body that no one dared touch remained hanging there. This scene was delightedly taken advantage of by some newly arrived SS who came to the spot for the occasion, as an opportunity to practice their photography.

THE KITCHEN.

Gyurka Rosenfeld came to me one day and suggested that I join him as a kitchen orderly. Since the SS who sized me up didn't seem to object, I joined the kitchen "staff".

We are given a real meal for breakfast, that is, a quarter of a loaf, and three portions of margarine. For lunch there is as much food as we can eat, including the wonderful thick bottom part of the soup. But all this at the price of lots of beating, and there is much work. It isn't difficult work but it is too much for many of us in our weakened condition.

I will try and take my chance.

In the kitchen the walls are lined by tubs for washing the potatoes. Each basin four times as large as a bath tub, has to be filled up from giant crates. After adding the water we stir the potatoes with an oar shaped shovel until they are clean and take them out to peel. Four or five of these basins the size of four bath tubs have to be finished by the twelve boys working daily in the kitchen. It is terrible. Dripping wet, our thumbs bleed from countless cuts. We peel away ceaselessly while the reddish blond SS guard beats us tirelessly with his thick bamboo club. This club as thick as an arm, bends or breaks under the blows. Sometimes, he would summon someone from the outside into the kitchen, lock him up in a room, make him go down on all fours

and then beat him with all his might. Why? Apparently just for kicks. The unfortunate creature was sometimes sent flying into the wall. Then he made him bend down and hold his ankles. He continued beating him with the supple cane till either the cane or the man breaks. His unfortunate victim either screams or bears his lot in silence. He has the time of his life until either one or the other breaks. Those who manage to remain silent, are rewarded by being beaten less severely.

At one time the redhead SS picked out a Hungarian Jew, who had a round aluminium pot fastened at the back on his belt. Such a blow landed on this utensil that it curled up around the stick and had to be forced off. The man bore his lot in silence and received no more blows. ~~But~~ he couldn't move away. He fell down like a log. As for us, we tried to guess who this hero might be, being certain that if the SS himself had got such a blow, he would have broken out yelling screaming and crying. The time would come when we would see groups of SS prisoners crying from fear even though nobody had touched them.

Three trucks of potatoes pull up in front of the kitchen. Their rear plan is removed, the back of each truck tilted and the potatoes fall to the ground. Our days portion of work has arrived. When we have finished the work, most of the potatoes are taken away to the SS kitchen and we are left mainly with the peels, for the Haftling soup. Now 25 of us do all the work in the kitchen. It takes us half an hour to bring in the mountain of potatoes, put them in the tubs, and immerse them in water. How could we accomplish such a feat so fast? I don't know, except that six SS are standing behind us with loaded pistols in their pockets which they finger all the time, while clubs in their hands remain at the ready. This, no doubt, gives us a little encouragement.

One day cabbage is brought in, equal in amount to our daily load of

potatoes. The leaves have to be torn off and the inner cores sorted into special boxes which are then carried to the grinders. The grinders cut these up into small pieces, which are cooked both for the hospital and the Gipsies. Our portion consists mostly of the skin of the potatoes and the outside leaves of the cabbage. The leaves are placed in big heaps on the tables and cut into small pieces with hatchets. At first it seemed fun, but then, when our wrists tired out and began to swell up, it became a bitter torment. The reddish blonde SS guard, who thrives in beating us, is right behind, swinging his bamboo club. God knows, where he obtained his inexhaustible supply of clubs. Although he had broken a considerable number, he seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of them always at hand.

Now it is my turn for some fun! This reddish blonde SS boy, takes me to the room and beats and kicks me, all over the place. I bid myself farewell but do not let myself cry out. I keep springing up and standing to attention. One blow, up again. Another blow and up again. Each blow throwing me back on the dirty cement floor, or to the wall.

Bleeding, from my nose ears and gums, the skin of my face torn, I have still not fallen to my knees crying and begging for mercy, as most of the gipsies and some of the the Jews had done before our eyes. After beating me for about twenty minutes, he takes me to his room and appoints me to be his batsman.

Upon my new appointment, he immediately throws his boots at me to be polished. Now I even dared to ask for some shoe polish. On this he grinned. He gave me some sort of grease, which I smeared on the boots and polished them. He seemed to be satisfied, so I ask him where he comes from. He is amazed at my audacity. Even the Kapos have not dared to ask him that. Yet he tells me and even offers me a cigarette. To

me! Now I grow really impudent and tell him I don't smoke, which incidentally was true. This made him angry. How did I dare refuse him? Lousy swine! "Lauskerl, verdammte Schweinejude!" He squeezes a whole packet of "Sondermischung" cigarettes and matches into my pocket.

I am left to roam freely in his room with it's fine bed. Later I report to the Kapo and am given half a loaf for my services. I send it at once to the boys who had not had their portions as yet.

When I can no longer bear to see the beatings and atrocities which we witness every day, I decide to leave my job as batsman. On my last day I raid the rubbish dump of the reddish blond. I came away with thirty two jack knives, one haircutter, a handkerchief, a towel, soap, one pound of boot grease, a brush and some cigarettes. The whole of all this immeasurable treasure is tied in my trousers legs and in this way I take it back with me to the block. I distributed the knives among the boys and left one for myself. There is a long knife with a mother of pearl handle, and has a Hebrew letter engraved on it. Suddenly I experienced my second great emotional upheaval. Among the stolen knives I come across one with the letters W.I. engraved on it. I knew this knife. I bought its twin and engraved G.A. on it. The knife was Ivan Wallenstein's. When I told the boys to whom it had belonged everyone froze in a one minute silence scout's salute to the one, who had disappeared. Ivan my dear good friend. He was gone. Who knew if we would ever see him again? Alas, that one minute silence indeed proved to be his last farewell. It contained all the pain and suffering and the tears of parting.

THE FATE OF THE GIPSYS.

That night during bread distribution, we are in a state o"Blocksperre" (locked behind doors). Everyone is confined to the barracks and there is great excitement everywhere. Bread distribution however goes on undisturbed. Jozsi Krausz and Sanyi Holczer, two of my original scout group, have started working lately in the kitchen, Tomi Ronai joined them and proved to be very useful. They are our "organizers" for food which is transported in their trouser legs.

We pass the time by cutting up the bread with the new knives and eat a carrot covered in mud. Everything seems to be all right, but we are worried about the fact that we are locked up.

We wait in tense silence. One of us sits on the ceiling window and raports the outside situation. The "Lagerstrasse" is empty, from time to time an SS appeares riding a bicicle. His cigarette illuminates his face now and then. A really pastoralic athmosphere, eccept our nervs being tense to ruption. This silence makes us shivering with panic and sweating in freeze.

At about 10 o'clock the silence is broken by the sound of motors and shouting orders. There appear to be many cars moving. Than we can hear the doors of the opposite barracks flinging up, harsh woices, wailing, women screaming and the crying of children, break the stillness of the night in consecutive quickness. The sound of chaos on

the other side of the wall. We had heard it all before, but now it somehow sounds different. Children cried," Vater! Mutti!" ("Mother! Father!"). Mothers searched for their children and men cursed in a swarming throng. Mengele had arrived. The angel of death was selecting those who suited his purposes. Among the drone of engines could be heard the howling of men being battered. Shouts and the crackle of pistols made us understand, that the German Gipsies were fighting an unequal and hopeless heroic battle.

In morning, I volonteer to the cleaning commando. We clear up blood stains. Various objects scattered everywhere are removed. Yesterday they were selling "Mahorka" tabak, in those yellow 200 gramm packings. As- if in a class of their own, they had been allowed to be together as families, in their own clothing and were not shaved, even not beaten. We had regarded them with envy because of this and were even forced to obey their orders. By the German they were ment as secundary grade human, but still some kind of human race. We are not human, we are like rats, to be killed off. We were even a little afraid of the gipsys. Now they were gone! All of them. And now we missed them. We knew what had happened the night before. We knew, they had fought for their lives. What would be our fate when our time came?

Disinfection started all over again.

At this time the Polish Jews, "The Poles" as we called them started arriving from Lietzmanstadt, or as they said, "Lodz'". Small, skeletal, starved, caveman like aggressive people, speaking Yiddish. Although it is well known that the barrels from the kitchen should not be touched, the Poles did not heed the blows and even the killings. The SS catched a few of them infiltrating into the kitchen and drowned them in the potato tubs and in the swimming pool outside. Even this did not prevent

them from attacking the food commando with the barrels; dipping in utensil they had been hidding or simply tripping the barrels over and licking up the food from the dirty ground. They even catch rats, which are abundant and somehow cooked them. Little were we to know, one day we would do the same.

These were the Poles of Lodz. The most miserable and unfortunate people I had ever seen until then. They had been suffering for five years, were wild, bestial and unsociable. Their efforts to satisfy their hunger became legendary throughout the whole camp. What would we be like after suffering for so long? Would we manage to still be alive?

WHO HELPS THE OTHER?

Someone at the fence is enquiring about Tomi Kisfaludi from block 11. I go there instead of him because he is still standing in line for lunch and I have already eaten mine. It turns out to be Vilmos Gergely, Agi's uncle. He says that he works in the "Schreibstube", ("office") so he knows almost everything going on in the Lager. He even has information concerning the women. I am very happy indeed to meet this man. After introducing myself and telling him everything about "us", we immediately become friends and promise to try to help one another. He tells me that he is together with another of Agi's uncles, Erno Karoly, the painter from Siklos, who paints for the Kapos, block overseers, kitchen supervisors and even for the SS. This way he can obtain almost anything, including newspapers. This is great news indeed for me! Dear God! What an important discovery it is for me! We both plan to establish contact with the women. This was the one and only time we had obtained some peas in the Birkenau camp and I shared them with Vilmos.

Villy and I write a very long letter on paper brought from the Schreibstube, with a pencil he had also acquired there. We sewed a little sack from rags, with needle and thread from the Schreibstube, wrote our names, birth place and the number of our Block, -our address- on it and then turned it inside out, so that the address was inside and wrote the names and birth town of the girls on the outside. We slipped

the letter inside this sack, pulled the closing cord, so the sack serving as an envelope was tightly closed and I tied it into my trousers. Next I volunteer to join the brick carrier commando since it passes by the women's camp. In this way we hope, that by shouting their names as we pass they would come to the fence and so we could throw them the bag containing the letter tied to a stone. They weren't there but in any case I threw the envelope over the fence.

It turned out, that they received the letters for they turned the sack back so that our address appeared on the outside and we received a reply which arrived when the sack was thrown back to the next brickcommando. I did not find out much about Agi, but at least I learned that she was still alive. So was Dudu, my sister. That was enough for me. It saddened me to realize, that we might die and never ever meet again. Later we learned that she left on a transport, together with her mother. That was the last I heard of her. Dudu will be expected home by her fiancee, Gyuri, who had been taken away to forced labour on the Russian border two years ago.

Uncle Willie is in block 7. This is considered to be a better block than ours. It is cleaner, the Blockaeltester is said to be more tolerant and the food rations larger. This contact enabled me to obtain a little something almost every day. The additional assistance can well make the difference between life and death. I owe Uncle Willie very much, he was very good to me and looked after me like a father. Many were the occasions when I collapsed and he would comfort me, or when I neglected myself he would cheer me up.

I am completely out of my mind now. Beside myself with hunger, I rave and to preach about the evil of man. I couldn't cry but constantly shiver with a kind of inner sobbing. My head and feet shake

ceaselessly. I thought I was going to die soon. Uncle Willie cheered me up by telling me that Agi had been seen. She looked well, and was wearing good quality warm clothes. He told me, my sister, Dudu was also fine, but this did not seem plausible. Had we not seen how thin the women were. At 4 o'clock in the morning, the time we were driven out of our barrack they were lining up or already standing half naked or in their slips in the freezing wind near the fence of the third camp, not far away. The epidemic in the women's camp B/2 and B/3, could not have made things better. Yet Uncle Villie continued to encourage me by reminding me of my loved ones. The hope of reunion gave everybody strength. Losing hope meant losing the whole game. Thank you Uncle Villie!

This is the time that Mr.Schreiber catches dysentery. Tomi Ronai manages to organize food from the kitchen for him, after I had "resigned" from the work because of the beating. I was unlucky, for no sooner had I left, then the big fat redheaded, chief of the beaters, left as well. Tough luck for me!

Uncle Schreiber, thin as a bone, kept telling us about the English and Russian losses and crying like a child about his little Sanyi. "But God will help us and we will all have lunch together at the lumber yard." Poor man, how he wept! If only his son could have comfort him then! Tomi Strenger was no longer with us, having been selected in the "hospital". As for uncle Schreiber he saw his own fate coming. He could neither have liquids nor were we able to give him as much bread as he needed, although we were ready to kill for it. We remind him of his beloved son Sanyi and encouraged him to try, but the cheerful natured always so happy, the man would burst out crying. He was taken "away" on the next selection.

HEAR OH ISRAEL!

The following day a horrible thing happens. All the youngsters are ordered to line up on the inspection ground. The Angel of Death, feet apart hands on hips, coat carelessly hung around his shoulders, stands there. He picks out a sixteen year old boy and orders him to stand beside the football posts. Then he nails up a narrow strip of wood horizontally at the level of the boy's head. Off we go! Running for our lives! Although many rose on tiptoes still their heads wouldn't reach the marker. Stiffly, he points to the left or to the right. Rigid, cold, professional. By the end of the second run he has selected two hundred and ninety of us. Among them is Oskar Weisz, the boy born in Cuba, Ivan Blum the musical prodigy who composed musical pieces which had already been performed in concert halls and Robi Bricht the athletic built heroically looking youngster, whose lack of hight is due to the fact that he was only fourteen years old. We are worried about Andris Kozma because he is covered with purulent wounds. But he is lucky. Yet there were many others, whose names I can't remember. They had been strong, healthy children, little athletes! As for Mengele, he is not satisfied! Selection begins again. He raises the marker and we

have to run a third time.

Later that day, there were three more selections. The same number every day from then on.

After the selection the unfortunate children are locked up in two empty blocks, the 24 and 26 blocks evacuated specially for the occasion. Guards with iron and wooden clubs watch over them there.

I, along with twelve of my comrades, are ordered to stand guard. Ivan Rado and Jancsi Korda qualify for the same order. Reluctantly we do the job tortured by the thought of what fate that has become us. We ourselvs have to obey or join those inside. The poor children cry and yell. We try to comfort them as best as we can, somehow to cheer them up- by telling them "You are going to pick potatoes", but they know the truth. I remember Ivan Blum's heroic condescending smile "Don't console me, Andris, we know what will happen to us". " We have had no food for two days, now but I don't care. I'm only sorry to leave our dear ones behind."

"I am not afraid to die, but if you manage to return home, don't forget to tell them what happened here." Ivan says. His voice croaked down, but he remained calm and didn't cry. He just fell into silence, possibly thinking of the beautiful melody which he later would hear "over there".

These poor children could have been ransomed for five dollars a piece. If only one had the money, you could buy a young life. Which of us had any money now!

We stand guard for two days. Many manage to be eloped during this time and these have to be replaced, to make the numbers tally. Now it is dangerous to walk on the "Lager Strasse", the main road of the camp, for the block supervisor makes up the number with people so, that

he catches along the way. Returning tired from forced labour, unaware of the danger, ignorant people are the victims. We, the guards are told that if anyone gets out it is our fault and we should be wary of replacing them ourselves. The "Stubendienst" (Attendant) makes his own transactions and the "Elteste" (Barrack kommander) takes out his own fortunate friends.

Fighting is inevitable among us. Ivan Rado, on guard duty, he deals out merciless blows. This was compensation for the fact that his mother had been taken away, he said. An outlet for his pain, although it was almost certain that she was still alive.

At last, on the third night, the guards are ordered away from the seclusion block. Lest Mengele himself would find us there and place us all inside as well. The poor condemned had had nothing to eat, "but food would not have been able to prolong their lives in any case".

That night the last selection takes place under the reflector lights. This is a general, final selection including adults as well. Uncle Mangold, the music teacher is taken and so is Dr. Vilmos Schwarz the district physician of Pecs, together with the son of the chief rabbi of one of the famous synagogues of Budapest. Krausz Jancsi was Stubendienst in block number 26. But this didn't help him now, he is selected, with many others. He has also been found too short to live. He was the lawyer Krausz's son from Pecs, to whom I owed a considerable amount of the food that was supplied to me through uncle Willie.

That night we are locked in block 11. Those in there, dare not break the terrible silence. Fearfully, with gleaming eyes we look over the now remaining few. Those, who had arrived from Pecs. Pali Weisz, Andris Kozma, Miki Lobl, Jancsi Korda, Ivan Rado, Gabi Wertheimer, Egon Loewi. These are all who are left. Tomi Ronai, Feri Groak, Sanyi Holczer,

Jozsi Krausz, Gyurka Singer must be somewhere! Perhaps they are in an other block?

Dr. Gyuri Hanak becomes a bread carrier, he informs us that Dr.Jozsef Wallerstein and Dr Kellerman, along with his son are in block 5. Deadly silence reigned over us all the time. We even shivered whenever an SS rode a bicycle past the block.

The Angel of Death had been afoot. He will claim a rich harvest! Suddenly car engines switch on. Death rattles. Now we hear shouting and weeping. Ivan Blum, Oszi Weisz, uncle Mangold and the others of our town are on their way as we mourn for them. The humming of cars cannot overcome the cries of those condemned to death.

--The noise of motors fades away. The whole camp sways under the black wings of gloom. We dare not fall asleep. We are not able to close an eyelid.

Next morning we, the previous guards, are ordered to the isolation blocks. A horrible sight meets our eyes. The walls are stained with black blood, with locks of hair stuck in it. Large blood puddles cover the floor. Treasured items such as jack knives and real spoons are strewn here and there. The walls are covered with epitaphs drawn with charcoal:- Name; "So and So, born in village M., on the 16 of June 1929, -..relatives living in N..." "Killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau crematorium". "Whose who survive, notify my family. Revenge our death! Don't forget our blood!" Then the saddest sight of all **"Hear Oh Israel**! The Lord is our God, He is the only one!" He, who is the Invisible!

How did the children obtain charcoal? And so much?

Hundreds of such epitaphs on the walls. Letters farewell notes. We stand frozen. Staring. Fixed by the evidence of the night's tragedy.

Apparently the children fought. Even the criminal "red triangle" Polish Blockelteste appears to be moved. But after standing silently for a while, he orders us to tidy up, however we can.

We pour many buckets of water on the floor, scrubbing "it all" up and wipe it with blankets which we drag across the floor. We tried to learn some of the scripts by heart, but could not remember a word. The walls are scrubbed with our bare hands. Down come the names, the data disappear. The discipline forbades soil the walls. Engraved are the "last will and testimony" upon our hearts and memory.

The crematorium now spurts long red, flames into the gaping, empty sky. Nauseated, my nostrils fill with the stench of scorching flesh.

--Night. I am on night watch, as seems to be the case lately. Staring at the flames which again spring up from the chimney of the crematorium.

Enormous tongues of fire paint the clouds in a crimson purple light for many kilometers around. The clouds reflect the dull glow lending the whole vicinity a mysterious lively red illumination. Silhouettes of black concrete pillars holding masses of barbed wires separate me from these flames. I stand mesmerized by them the whole night. My Jewish nation is ascending to the sky.

It must have been around 9 o'clock the following morning, when a sudden blast shakes the air. It comes from the direction of the crematorium. A crash. A gate opened and a stripped uniformed Haftling rushes out shouting: "Revolt! Revolt!" Then his voice cracks as his breath is stifled by a grip on his neck. He disappears throttled from behind.

The blast sent papers flying through the air, flung up high by the heat over there. A few parched pieces of paper slowly swaying descend

in front of me. I pick some of those least burned, up myself. They are filled with writing, I try to read the contents.

Rows and rows of names in columns, dates of birth and other personal data. They include causes of death such as heart failure, kidney disease, pneumonia, cerebral hemorrhage, etc. Here, from the site of those holy flames, this immense heroic blast brought to rest at my feet evidence of the diagnosis of the sickness of the Nazis. . What a satanic scheme! This is how these Nazies explain away the gassed multitudes. But why? To whom do they have to give this reckoning? If anyone else lays eyes on these statements, what then? Would anyone believe them? Would they themselves believe it? No! Impossible! These people must be mad. Their power had made them crazy. Satan must have been grinning at me at this moment, from these flames.

But now I know the secret. This gives me a reason to live! I must tell the whole world, to fulfil the testimony of the children who had departed and disclose the information of the fabricated accounts that I had found. My task is to survive! This is no longer my own private issue, but of common interest! My responsibility is to be a messenger of these events. This is imperative!

THE TEREZIN TRANSPORT.

New inmates arrive. The transport from Seredin or as called in Hungarian, Szered, the Slovakian Jews. They had already been through many abhorrences. Handsome, strong men wearing excellent knee high laced boot called Canadies. The Kapos plundered them all, collected the boots in blankets and carried them away. They are given old, worn out shoes or wooden clogs instead. Since they knew hungarian, before they could be robbed by the use of the story of the "apparatus" for finding gold and valuables, we managed to advice one of them not to be taken in and he passed this information on. They surrendered nothing. We had a lot to talk about.

The Kapos bring in two trembling men. Traitors! These bastards had denounced and betrayed thousands of Polish, Czech and Slovakian Jews and other to the Gestapo. Now, the Germans had decided that their turn had come. Responsible for the death of thousands, they stand trembling for their lives. At the interrogation that follows, one of them blames it all on a certain Salamon, who had fled and is not present to be held to account, but witnesses to the crimes are here. The Kapos fall upon the scoundrels, tearing, kicking and beating them. They then drag them

to block 14 and lay one of them on the floor. They lay an iron pole on the chest of Salamon's friend. Kapos stand at each end of the pole leaning on others for support whilst other Kapos hold the miserable bastard's feet and start dragging him along the floor. The iron pole is carefully secured on his chest with the two swaying Kapos balancing upon it. Not a groan, his ribs were crushed and he was reduced to a bloody twitching mass of flesh before he could admit a sound. This is the only time when the Kapos receive a cheer for their nasty work! They gave them punishment, according to the laws of Auschwitz. The dying of a hundred death, yet unequal to the tortures of many thousands of souls. We had returned to the jungle, even worse.

-Now ahe Czech transport arrives from Terezin, a place called Teresienstadt. Also tough looking men and if at all possible, even more disciplined and sociable than the Slovaks. Among the best people I ever met. Although it took us hours to line up, they did so in five minutes.

Such Terezin people come to block 24. We are their stubendienst (pupils) on the first day, but they soon catch up with their duties and fire us from our positions the following day. This is a serious loss to us. We cease to be the staff of the block. We can't get as much to eat as before. We are forced to retreat from the bunks at night and have to lie on the cement floor. Yet in spite of the fact that they deprive us of our jobs they let us help with food distribution as we are still the experts in this field. At least we can have our lunch, for the Czechs are unable to eat it. To them this tasteless, saltless dish water is unpalatable. It is all ours. That week we gulped down five to six liters of soup every day, which certainly brings back some of our strength. I for example, managed to gain back all but five kilos

of my previous weight.

We now live in block 14. Miki Loebl, Andris Kozma, and Pali Weisz are also here. Boys from other towns we came to know in Birkenau as well. We obtain so much food from the Czechs, that we are able to transfer a large quantity to our other comrades. Once we obtained a whole barrel for them. What a delight it is to watch these famished boys eating, nay, gobbling up the nauseating stuff with absolute pleasure. But oh! May be Dudu and Agi are also hungry. May be starving. I am sure they too, could use some help of this kind. These thoughts are always on my mind.

EPISODES.

By this time there are very few of us left. The younger boys have escaped with the labour transports long ago. In this way little Kohn, Singer, Gyuri Rosenfeld left us as well as Holczer Sanyi and Miki Loewi, a boy from Pest, whom we had come to know through the Scouts and who had become a very good comrade. Whoever remained now, usually preferred labour. As labourers they still had some hope of not having to run under a lath and ending up in the gas chamber.

A terrible storm. Just before the Appell, (inspection,). The rain is so heavy that we can't see more than twenty five meters in front our noses. Nothing can been seen or heard but we have to line up for the Appell. A small Polish child is hiding this time and the numbers don't tally. So we stand in line until 9 o'clock, for no one is to move when one of us is missing. The rain subsides but we are still in water up to our ankles. Some tried to sneak into the barracks and are beaten out again.

It becomes dark, stars appear gleaming mysteriously from behind the clouds who's edges glitter painted in light. The clouds lit up, bathed in the light of the silvery moon. So we stand shivering with cold,

whilst the puddles start to film over, ice up, contracting like skin on warm milk. It is freezing.

Eventually the child is found. Beaten up by three SS, he ended up in hospital, and we return to the barracks.

We have to take off our muddy shoes at the entrance and go in barefoot. There is a commotion in front of the door, the shedding of shoes proceeds slowly in these conditions. Slow movers are trampled under foot by the pressing, pushing throng behind. Ferike meanwhile stands ready, he hands out a tremendous blow to anyone who tries to come in with his shoes on. The Kapos are guffawing. More mud is carried into the block than usual and we are all covered with it from head to foot. Washing our clothes means to sleep without them. So this was a very serious matter. Since our clothes are wet anyway, this time it doesn't matter so much. We hang our dripping things up and shivering naked, we lie down soaked as we are, under the dirty dribble from our clothes. This was how we "sleep" that night. Meanwhile during the night the mud on our clothes froze stiff and in the morning we are obliged to put on the damp and cold clothes again. Whilst the moon is still shining, we are ordered out again.

Those lucky enough not to have swollen feet stick muddy feet into shoes, which have naturally been mixed up in the dark. Tumbling, strangely clad, often barefooted, yelling and swearing we fall into "stoves".

These "stoves" are the heating system of the inmates when the cold becomes unbearable. The so called "stove" requires that there be as many participants as possible to make one up. Two inmates lean one against the other's back, so as to protect their backs from the cold. Now a third leans his back against their side, a fourth against the

other, then more and more inmates join the group. The more there are the warmer it is, for those in the middle who are now well protected from the wind. The pressure on the inside is enormous. Threatened by being crushed, as breathing became nearly impossible under this pressure of the strange bodies, those, on the inside, now warmed up a little, prefer the cold to suffocation try to push their way out again. Those on the outside push their way in. Whenever a stove broke up, we would start all over again. Each dawn, the whole camp fills with these surging " stoves".

AWAY FROM AUSCHWITZ!

On our way back from block 24 to ours, we see a clerk from the Schreibstube writing up a transport. He profess to be interested especially in young people, proclaiming "It is important to get away from Auschwitz now."

We all decide to join up. My friends Ivan Rado,Jancsi Korda,Pali ~~Wei~~sz as well as Pista Weisler from Ercs, Andris Weisz from Szombathely and others. Miki Loebl and Andris Kozma begg us to stay. Not to part after having been together for so long. We refuse, determined to leave on this transport. As for myself I will be glad of a chance to get away from this hell. Had I known that this was only "the ante room to hell" I would probably have reconsidered it.

We can no longer stand the constant daily selections. Sometimes five or six of them at a time in a day. Standing and waiting, perhaps to be picked out of line and sent to be gassed. Anything but that! Uncle Willie advises me to "piss off" at any price! There must be an end to all this. These are the last transports and we should be in it. Horrible things will no doubt continue to go on here. So we should not hesitate, "don't look back", just go! I take his advice. I can't be of any help here and anyway, Dudu and Agi had already left. We prepare to join the transport of fifteen hundred Jews from Czechoslovakia. May be we will have a chance to survive with these good people.

Ivan Rado and I agree to share all our food. I give him half of that

which I obtain from uncle Willie. He lets me have half of whatever he obtains from his mother, who worked in some place in the camp as Radiologist and was able to pass on food. I steal potatoes from the kitchen, which we sell for half loaves of bread. Uncle Willie does not dare to go that far himself, but I am starving, so I go to "organize" even at night. Then Ivan's mother is suddenly placed on a transport to leave Auschwitz. He seems to be so upset by this, that he "forgets" to share the package, as he promised. Not a morsel he gives to me. He cannot have forgotten that. Even in school a pupil doesn't forget a bad mark. Miki asks me in an outright, "Why doesn't Ivan give you his share?" Miki is in Andris Kozma's group after all. I shall not die from starvation I think to myself, but I don't answer. I feel very hurt and indeed hungry! Ivan ought to be my best friend after Ivan Wallenstein's departure, but he doesn't behave like it.

The transport is being set up. We pass six selections until we are finally accepted. Selections are conducted in the following manner - everyone has to strip naked and stand barefoot for hours while Mengele inspects us, row after row. He looks at our chests in front and at our buttocks behind. I haven't the faintest idea what he is looking for. Those who have injuries are immediately sent up the chimney so people camouflage their wounds with dirt, or a kind of white powder, which the doctors gave against diarrhoea, called "albus", mixed with beetroot. He inspects thousands in this way. For some reason or another, he selects out many who are stronger than myself and left me alone. This is a queer man indeed!

A large group of naked men ran past us, clothes in hand. They look well fed. These are the "Canadists". They receive the arriving transports at the station, unloaded the cars and sorted out everything.

Fat guys, it was said that they live exclusively on sardines, cakes, sweet bread, chocolate and fruit. We learn this from the veterans. They sorted out the goods, the newcomers left in the waiting room before the so called "showers". Canned food, underwear, clothes including good overcoats, shoes, etc. etc. All this is divided into separate rooms. Ordnung muss sein! (Order must be kept!). The goods are sent to the poor Germans unfortunate enough to suffer damage during the bombings. However this left enough for the "canadists" to be very well off indeed. Obviously it is of an advantage to have one of these Canadists as an acquaintance. One could be very well off in this way. They even have oranges and other tropical fruit we are told. Althoughsome ofthe spoils are also shared by the SS and the Blockeltesters.

We starve! The Polish inmates would risk their lives for a loaf of bread. Jancsi Korda in return for two portions of bread receives a pair of knee high boots from one of them.

Uncle Willie comes to do me one more favour before the last farewell. He commends me to Dr.Erdelyi's care who is in the same transport and asks him to be my guardian. How can I ever thank Willie that among all this chaos, he has the energy to think about me. I nearly burst out crying in front of him, but I am too ashamed to do so. I am in very bad shape by this time, my nerves are so strained. I often shake with inner sobbing, but I do not let myself weep openly. Secretly I yearn to be able to cry my heart out in front of a true, good friend. I have no such person left now. Miki and uncle Willie are no more by my side. Ivan Rado is still there, but turned out to be unfaithful to me. Miki, Andris and others stay behind. I am indeed sorry to leave them, but perhaps it is all for the best.

NEW DIRECTIONS.

Those selected for the transport are naturally to be disinfected. The torture of this process starts again. We stand naked from 9 in the evening until after midnight. It is the 6th October on a frosty cold starlight, Birkenau night and the cold is a hard test for us. Although somewhat hardened, these procedures seem to be worsening all the time. The constant selections become unbearable. We hope for better luck elsewhere.

We obtain new clothes after the disinfection. Mine are even thinner if that is at all possible than the old ones. Now back to block 11 for our last night. Our darling Ferike is still there, but this time we don't care. My body is thrilled by a happy sense of exultation, the like of which I had not sensed for a very very long time. I hug a stranger, a Czech, cover him with kisses, smother him with embraces and Ferike doesn't know what to make of this. He isn't used to such behaviour and for once doesn't know how to react. I lay down, happy that I will soon be rid of Auschwitz. At long last we are leaving this place. Leaving, but what about the others? Dear God! Please let me see them again! Dudu and Gyuri, Agi and her mother, and her father. I feel certain I will be reunited with my father, mother and brother, I will

get home. I feel this to be a sure thing, just help us to endure this endless hell!

I sleep happily and soundly for the first time since I arrived in Auschwitz. I dream that I am at home again with my parents and little brother. Talking to the boys and listening to Agi. What else could a Haeftling ask for?

On the following day, for the first time we are even given coats. I received a fantastic large overcoat, like my father had at home. I saw the coat in the pile of coats to be distributed. It was the sixt from the top. So I purposely stepped out of the line and returned to be sure that I would be the sixth. With eager attention counted the coats with my eyesas I went along. As I got closer and closer. The coat was given to me! Oh, this reminds me so much of my father! The last time I saw him he was being led away by a policeman. What is happening to him now? What about my mother and my little brother? When I last saw them together, she was holding the baby in her arms, crying. Is it true that the "Arrow Cross" Nazi Party is in power in Hungary ? We heard such gossip lately. Where is Dudu? I hadn't even been able to say good bye to her when we were separated. Or at least hold her hand one more time. I still carry her letter in my shoe completely faded all blurred by now. How about Agi? I hadn't been able to say farewell to her either. She just looked at me and laughed the last time I saw her "See you. Remember to find me after the bath." Her hair had been blowing in the wind. Now she would be as bald as the others and no doubt as thin and miserable as them. I longed to know about them! Did they have coats like mine? Alas father, isn't this your coat? I check it, but it was its twin, that of a gentleman from Budapest. It came from a first class tailor's shop made to measure. What an elegant, fine

coat, on a tortured starving Haftling like me. I stroke it with my fingers, pet and hug the coat and it feels good. I kiss my only friend warmly. It is the one who will save my life together with my father's "durable" waterproof high leather boots.

We line up for the so called dinner. I eat six times my portion and am so full that I am sure I can go without another bite for five days. The journey is expected to be difficult. Fifteen hundred Jews are lining up, in front of the kitchen, wearing overcoats. Auschwitz, the middle of October, 1944.

Pansies and "forget me nots" are growing in front of the kitchen. They look so lovely for if they were to droop the gardener would disappear. Pansies are my favorite flowers. Their name in hungarian means "little orphan". It is a lonely, scentless, flower with exquisite colours. We are as lonely as they are. The "forget me not" is a tiny little faint blue flower. I remember when I was a first grader, at the end of the school year, at the graduation ceremony we lined up in front of the graduates, one facing the other and we, the little ones handed the graduate a bunch of these small blue flowers, saying "Forget me not." I had not forgotten that, how would I ever forget this! If I survived, would I ever get such a bunch of forget-me-nots or would my share be pansies alone? My mother's grave, full of such beautiful pansies. It was very doubtful if my own grave, would be anything like that! Thank goodness that my mother didn't live to see these horrors! For this is Auschwitz, in the middle of October 1944.

Music begins to play. We march through the gate. Past the barbed wire fence, towards the women's camp on another wire lined path. The wired fences are electrified on both sides. I have a last glimpse of uncle Willie, as he searches for me among the 5 rows of men. We are so many

that he can't see me, in my big overcoat, but at least I catch a glimpse of him. We pass the gate for the last time. We will never want to return. Never hear this music again, or see the flowers, the hospital, the swimming pool. We leave all that behind. The women's camp no longer interests me, Dudu and Agi are no longer there, but the Czechs shout searching for their families. We cross the connecting road beside camp "A", by the railway tracks. Ivan Rado starts to shout madly, he has caught sight of a woman who he thinks he recognizes as his mother. But she doesn't see us. Ivan shouts and kicks to no avail. As we turn towards one of the the everburning crematoriums we start to worry. It is still working not far from the other, which was heroically destroyed. "About face!" comes the command and we advance in single file past a bread truck from which everyone is given a whole loaf, 80 gramm of margarine and a piece of sausage. Then we are off, towards a waiting train. It is growing dark, the reflectors of the fence are already being lit.

It has taken a long time to get out of Auschwitz, we pass the barbed wire fences and see guns posts and mashine guns cannons everywhere. At last after being crammed into dirty freight wagons, we slowly begin to move. Then the train picks up speed. The brightly lit town of Auschwits fades away in the distance.

Three days and three nights we travel, just like in a fairy tale. We pass enormous railway stations, brightly illuminated at night. A sign reads, "The Labour recruitment center Tropau". We see military camps. The cities of Olmutz, Brunn, Znaim, Budweiss, Linz, and Salzburg go by, as well as an enormous park of great beauty and snow covered mountains. On one of the tops there stands a deer, watching the train go by. Would we ever be as free as that deer is now? Oh how we envy it! We pass

near an attractive summer resort as well. Alas, there was little we could discover closed in our dark cattle wagon, whilst pressing against the small window, trying to get a glimpse of the free world outside. We go by farm women ploughing, wrecks of German fighter planes, large bombers bearing American markings and craters everywhere. Some of which were still smoking.

The train stops. A nearby city being bombed halts our advance. We wait and watch death pouring down from the sky not far away. We smile at each other in silence. The planes look so beautiful and there are so many of them. They seem to be unescorted by their fighters and although the German anti aircraft guns pound away as best they can, nothing seems to be able to shot them down. They just climb higher out of reach of the German guns. The legendary German "hunter" fighters are no where to be seen. Is there no one to challenge the enemy planes! Where are the Molders, Galland, Bender, Heilinghausen and the other fighters now? Are they in hiding? Is their spirit flagging? No! Germany seems to be idly looking on. "They have no gasolin for their planes", one of the fellow Czecks says. "They wanted Baku, they saw the oil fields by eye, from the Elbrus-peak, but Stalingrad sipped them away!"

All our bread is gone in two days, inspite of all our effort to try and save some. The Czechs turned out to be not only more thrifty than we are. They also proved themselves to be good comrades, for they break off chunks of their own bread and give it to us, the youngsters. They encourage us to trust them. They would look after me, it seems.

We resume the journey and I am hungry. I put my hands into my pockets and feel gloomy. Finally, we stop for good. It is night again. The wagon doors are flung open. This is our destination. The sign on the platform carries the name - KAUFERING.

Life was a mute dance.

(Sandor Marai.)

KAUFERING.

I haven't heard the name before.

The Kapos who come to greet the train say it is a wonderful place here, like a nursing home compared to Auschwitz. We tend to believe them, for they do not beat us out of the train. Their behaviour is completely different indeed. "Gentlemen, please line up." What a way to talk! We haven't heard this type of conversation for three and half months.

The first five hundred taken off the train march in line to a certain camp No.7. The extremely polite Kapo goes with them.

We ask around and learn that we are not far away from the city of Munich, in the so called Kaufering camp district. It is 11 o'clock at night on the 26th of October, so they say.

At the station we relax for we notice that only old Wehrmacht guards were guarding us. It turns out that they look after us only as a favour. Theyr job was only to guard the station. Young SS soldiers now replace them. We start to march five in a row. We can not see the way because it is pitch dark as we leave the station. Yet we feel, we are descending a steep slope.

At last we reach a road. The rhythmic beat of 500 pairs of boots and shoes now sounds on the smooth, hard concrete of an obviously excellent German road. As we march away to the unknown. A slight, misty rain begins to fall, slowly seeping through our clothes until we are wet to the skin. It turns out that the camp is several kilometers away. Suddenly we make a short turn onto a gravel path. We climb up a steep hill over an embankment and are hit by the glare of strong reflectors. Through the drizzle we can make out a row of double barbed wire fences supported by wooden poles,capped by lamps, shining 5-6 meter intervals. About 50 meters apart and at each of the four corners of this camp are wooden watchtowers. These are occupied by SS guards handing their machine guns. The rain becomes strikingly visible in the strong glare of the searchlights. In rows of five we march through the gate and are received by a screwed up bulldog faced SS junior officer who counts us. His well fed bulging body, pouting lips and casually extended leg already demonstrate his excellent capacity in the exact execution of his duties. This was Schaarfuhrer Kapelsbauer, who turns out to be one of the fear of the camp. A good looking officer with a devilish face and narrow lips approaches. He stood in the darkness of the barrack door untill now, near the main gate, underneath the surchlight. Flat capped, spread legged, coatless, wearing a jacket and his mirror shining black SS boots, with his little black dog prancing around him, let us guess his identity as camp commander. He impatiently hits his boots with his riding stick. This is the boss, Lieutenant Tempel. He swears at us cursing these lousy Jews, who had to arrive at such an impossible late hour.

The board posted in the camp reads:- K.L.Dachau, L.B. Kaufering, L.4.. I look again, lest I missed some thing. No doubt about it:

K.L.Dachau, L.B.Kaufering, L.4. That is to say, "Koncentracionslager" (concentration camp) Dachau, "Lagerbezirk" (camp district) Kaufering, "Lager" (camp) number 4. I think of Schuschnig the former Kanzler and the others, but try to look at the bright side of things. There are no barracks in sight, only small roofs sticking out of the ground, like playing cards propped up against each other. Rows of grass covered roofs, popping out in the dark. They must be air raid shelters. Away from the fence, it is too murky to make out anything clearly.

We are divided into groups of 50 and each group disappears into one of these strange looking underground premises. I stumble in the dark barely able to make out a bench like something which extends out as far as the edge of the roof. We lie down on this woodden platform.

The Blockaelteste, (barracks commander) who has the candle, greets us with the news that we are in a fantastic place! No more no less than a nursing home! How happy we should be! A beautiful spot, an out of the way place among the woods surrounded by snow capped mountains.

When morning comes we discover that we are sleeping in a barrack half underground. At the entrance, beyond the narrow door three wooden steps lead to a central about 20 meter long 80 cm. wide strip of hard beaten earth, which goes all the way to the other end. Where there is found a large, triangular window. On both sides of this strip are placed the wooden planks at bench level which serve as beds for twenty five men on each side of the central aisle. The planks are in fact lying on the ground, on each side of a dug out trench with the side sloping roof over it. The roof itself, about two meters high above the trench and slopes down to be a few inches above the person's head at it's lower end, where it makes an angle with that sleeping platform. The whole wooden structure gives the appearance of Noah's ark. The roof

covered with earth, has grass growing all over it. Strengthening our impression of the previous night, that they look like cards. A few weeks after our arrival a small iron stove is installed in the middle of the barrack and a brick chimney protruds out through the sloping roof. This divids the strip leaving only a fifty cm. wide passage for communication between the two halves. If the triangle window broke, it had to be substituted by a piece of cardboard which made it very dim inside. Luckily, electricity is later installed. Now a lamp hangs beside the stove, which naturally became the social center of the barrack. One can warm oneself here when there is fire in the stove and on the rare occasions that potatoes are also available they could be baked on the little stove.

On the morning of the first day we are ordered out of the barracks. The camp seems almost deserted and the Blockaeltester says that the others are at work. During the daytime the barrack is empty except for the commander and his orderly. Who is usually the inmate who happens to be sick at the time. If it rains the water remains on the floor, occasionally rising to flood the bed planks.

The Blockaeltester himself condescends to speak to us. It seems he is not so important in this place as in Birkenau. His main duty is to make sure the blocks are clean and to distribute the daily rations. We are sent to the Appelplatz to get acquainted with the camp regime. The jewish Lageraeltester or camp elder makes a speech for our benefit, describing our location as a few kilometers from Landsberg am Lech in Bavaria, in camp number 4 of the Kaufering camp district which contains more than ten so called "Waldlager". (Camp in the woods.) It belongs to the Dachau center which is near the city of Munich. We are supposed to be quarantined for a certain time, during which we can learn to

appreciate the food. He lets us off with the warning "No loafing around the kitchen." If we hawe no idea why he says this at the time, it becomes clearer to us, the following day.

Lunch, the many hundred men line up in rows of three and march to the kitchen. There everyone is handed a plate of one liter capacity, named "Schuessel". So, much better than Birkenau. Every one eats from his own Schuessel. That day we have a two course meal. Potatoes with goulash. The dispenser sinks a plate into a barrel containing boiled unpealed potatoes which we receive in our stretched out cap held in front of us. If you are lucky, you get it all in your cap, if not, half of your portion falls back into the barrel. The goulash soup is poured into the plates. It could have been poured over the potatoes but we wanted it separately, the potatoes remaining in our caps. Some of us even found some meat in the soup. We are glad to have discovered such a marvelous place. The food is great, there is no work, everyone is given two blankets and we don't have to lie on a cement floor.

The tomorrows, turn out to be different.

HOLZMANN AND MOLL.

Four in the morning the sky is strewn with stars and we are shivering with cold. The poor Polish Jews, original residents of the camp are still in their summer clothes! No overcoats. Ragged, starved and very thin, walking skeletons. Their eyes blaze with hunger. They had a hot meal only in the evening, since their lunch was handed out at their place of work, which later we were to find out was not worthy of the name of food. The Kapos and the "Ordnungsdienst" (the so called "O.D.", responsible for order) beat them cruelly. It is terrible to watch these helpless creatures, who could speak no other language than Yiddish. We, who haven't as yet worked, receive normal soup at noon. They, the poles, called us Gentlemen and begged us for a bite of bread. When the Blockaeltesters (block elders) or O.D.s, caught them begging they gave them a bloody beating. They try to prevent the poles coming near us because they are infested with lice. We were disinfected in Auschwitz. Poor souls, how we pity them! At this stage it is still a mystery to us, to know what kind of work they have to do each day. We line up at 4 o'clock and stay standing where we are until 6 o'clock. Then they are led away and we can go back to the block. We could hear

them yelling and crying as the SS and ODs beat them with iron rods and steel poles. Cursing them all the time, for being unable to march straight on the bumpy road.

A few yellow and blue flowers still bloom on the grassy side of the barracks. We gingerly pick a bunch of them, surprised that the SS don't beat these out of our hands. We are given large,250 gramm portions of bread of 250 grams each and three or four other items such as 20 gr. margarine, sausage, cheese, honey, or jam. There is always two of these items for us. We are feeble and need this rest and food, to regain our strength after our stay in Auschwitz followed by the long journey.

During this period, while we still had some time on our hands, we receive our new identity. Ordered to the administration block we line up in a single row and again on an arm high wooden shelf we stand filling up our personal details. This time there is no "X"-ray machine buzzing as in Birkenau. The Haeftling clerk, the Schreiber (records orderly) announces everyone his number, which he stamps on the personal sheet we filled. My new name turns out to be 115-100. "Hundrtfuenvzehn Hundert" in German, "Stopatnac Sto" in Czeck. Ivan and Jancsi Korda become new close relatives of mine and the whole Czeck community including myself become one happy family. We are fed a few more days and then we are ordered out to work for the first time.

The camp supplies the slave labour for two big firms, Holzmann and Moll. The four of us, Jancsi, Ivan Rado of Pecs as well as Andris Weisz of Szombathely and myself will go together to Holzmanns.

Our first impression of the camp had been that it was not too bad, but now we have to stand in line and are beaten again. How terrible! The process seems to be repeating itself!

We march out under a clear starry sky to the railway tracks. We

discover that we have to travel to work by train. We are made to wait an hour before the train arrives. Enough time to let it dawn on us that this may turn out to be even worse than Auschwitz! The train rolls in slowly and heavily. Not surprising because we are amazed to see such a rickety old train still moving. Empty windows, the roof broken and only the axles appear intact. The SS shouted, "Einsteigen!" ("step in!"). This seemed unnecessary for in a giant leap the whole crowd surged forward scratching, biting, squeezing, kicking, everyone wanting to be the first to mount the rickety train. We, the newcomers do not understand. What's all this rush to get to work? Everyone fighting to obtain one of the few seats available. We soon learn from the poles that the journey lasts at least an hour, therefore those sitting there are able to take a nap. We are all together in the same boat now.

Seventy to hundred people cram into a wagon. Huddled together, those in the luggage racks, nearly squeezing one another to death. Swearing and cursing the whole journey.

We pass a dense forest, in almost complete darkness.Until after a curve, we are suddenly blinded by dazzling lights. An enormous, mountain sized concrete dome stands in front of us. Iron poles sticking out of it everywhere, in ordered rows. Giving the impression of an enormous hedgehog. Beside the dome there is a hole, tens of meters in depth. Whose sides are filled with reinforced concrete.

This we learn is the death cauldron, "the Moll". The Poles descend from the train. We already think, it won't be easy to get out of here alive. Surprisingly however, the train begins to move again. We travel on for another half hour, only to reach a similar construction - The Holzmann. For about ten minutes more, we move past a multitude of rusty tractors, concrete mixers, baggers, cranes and a sundry of mechanical

monsters. Then we depart, or rather fall off the train and line up. Spurred on by the SS batons as usual. We march along the tracks, cross a small wood and reach one of these enormous reinforced concrete building sites.

Massive steel mouthed machines are excavating. There is a deep pit on each side of the dome with a gravel mountain climbing up in the middle. The pits are tens of meters deep. I have never before seen anything comparable in size to this construction.

Work is in progress in one of the pits. Carts are pulled containing wet concrete in order to fill up both its sides. There is a network of corridors inside the construction. The mountain has to be covered with 5 meter thick concrete. Then gravel and trees are planted over it. It will grow into an immense hangar like monstruosity.

Tens of thousands of slaves labour on the mountain and in the pits. Swarming on multitudes of platforms and scaffoldings. Machines rumble. Rhythmic orders, hammering, shouting, yelling echo through the air and mix in a perfect babel. A conglomerate of people of all sorts and ranks:- Belgians, Greeks, Russians, Dutch, Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Germans, Lithuanians, Rhodosians, Cretans, and God knows who else? All working under the threat of SS clubs. The "TODT" organization, for concrete labours, engaging non jewish workers, prisoners of war, volunteers and skilled workers, who all are our bosses and are allowed to treat us as they like.

We find ourselves in the hole. An endless descending flight of stairs. Now our task is to pull carts filled with concrete at a 45 degree angle on the steep, hard, slippery concrete, up again.

At the edge of this pit there are enormous concrete mixing machines. Slaves feed them with cement, gravel and water. The machines constantly

belch out concrete through their mouths, pipes of 40-50 cm. in diameter. We push the pipe over tu a cart. The later when filled has to be pushed a distance of about 200 meters, where it must then be tipped over. This is the so called "Kippe". We level off the concrete and push the wagon back for the next one to arrive. When one layer of concrete is completed the rails are extended. 1/2 meter tall iron grids are covered with concrete. These reinforced concrete layers, cover the dome.

Many a colleague slipp and fall off the staggering tall concrete mountain into the abyss. Smashed by the iron girders and planks on the way. By the time his body hits the ground, nothing is left but a bloody mass.

This is our first day's work and we are appalled by the sight. We didn't know, that Moll was even worse than this. We were to learn this when we ended up there on the second day. A construction site many hundred of metres in size. We are told that more underground cities like this are being built, but we have no idea what all this is for. Not even the Organization Todt or OTs (the German certified forced labourers) were sure of the purpose of the huge project. We all believed it to be some underground aircraft plant.

The whole area is covered with enormous depots of rubber, iron bars, wires, cables, concrete, lumberyards, wells, water and oil pipes and dynamite bunkers. All in the service of that enormous construction. The huge concrete dome is built at the price of the lives and blood of hundreds and thousands of blows, bone fractures, sickness, suffering, and death.

A cargo train is climbing and carrying the cement, sand, iron material, and other supplies to the top of the concrete dome where a

big Baustelle (building site) is established.

The big pit has to be bridged over and the wide bridge to be extended from the edge to the dome. Enormous pine trees are brought in. We nail two of these together and try to raise them by means of ropes. Hundreds pull the ropes and the enormous pillar begins to rise. It is almost standing vertically upright when the first rope breaks. Then the others give way as well. People fall and the pillar tumbles back onto the concrete with a loud crash twisting the iron. Sweeping some of the carts into the pit, together with ten or more of workers who meet their death. This time, Jews, OTs and SS staff together.

In spite of all the difficulties we are persuaded to construct a plank structure and the wooden bridge is ready in less than a week. Already the carts are crossing it, pushed along with their fresh concrete. Everything shakes, the earth rumbles. The supplementary train arrives and helps to feed the mountain, hundreds of iron bars, thousands of tons of concrete. It looks like a swarming ant hill. I feel like Gulliver in the kingdom of the giants.

We have no gloves and carry the cold, frozen rusty iron girders painfully in our bare hands. The girders are about 12 meters in length and our hands are soon covered with wounds and sores. Skin and flesh hang in shreds and the mere touch of the rusty iron caused excruciating pain. We drag along the heavy bars, weeping cursing, hoping for some miracle to deliver us.

We are beaten cruelly. The wagons have to be unloaded in a few minutes. We aren't working fast enough. One of the boys collapses and his work falls onto us as well. So the three minutes we are allowed to unload the track are extended to five and then the wagon has to turn back. After this iron girders have to be carried down to where work is

in progress, on the virtually vertical side of the dome. We clutch the iron bars sticking out of the concrete with one hand to keep steady. Whilst keeping our eyes on the improvised wooden stairs and hold the iron girder to be placed in position with the other hand at the same time. From behind us, the sound of blows and shouts of "Tempo-los-weiter!" ("Hurry up! Get on with it!").

One unlucky fellow stumbled and falls. On his way down, he grabbs a girder to try to safe himeself. This is being held by some one else, who now goes down together with him into the pit. Their blood spilling on the way, continues its downward trickle, while they had already met their end.

The iron girder has to be retrieved. These are valuable. The unfortunate Jews or what is left of them, remain where they are. No one is allowed to move them away.

Work has to go on, everything goes on. "Los! los,-weiter,-tempo!." "Tak, tak,.. dali, dali,.. yazda, yazda!" etc.etc.

CEMENTHALLE KAWABAU.

We are in an enormous hall the floor of which serves as the ramp of the connecting rails. Lamps are burning from seven in the evening to seven in the morning. Night shift. Misty grey dust is twirling in the air. Cement dust. This is the dread of the inmates: Cement. It is death itself. Hundreds of slaves carry the cement filled sacks from the train to the end of the depot, a distance of a 100 meters. The sacks weigh 50 kilos each. Two men stand on the train and hand down the sacks, whilst the others carry them away on their backs. Lifting the sacks and handing them down without tearing them is difficult, but carrying them is no joke either. Sweat pours down the men, their legs shaking as they stagger under the weight of the sacks which are often heavier than their own weight. The workers are mostly boys of sixteen to eighteen years old, weak, thin, weighing hardly 45 kgms themselves. There are some older Polish Jews among us as well. They are almost weaker than the younger boys. If this is at all possible? We are forced to keep up the pace of the work. "Los - los - weiter!" ("Hurry up! Get on with it!")

The train is finally unloaded, at the price of one of our companion's life and serious injury to several others. One fellow threw himself under the train, the other two with him lost control of their nerves.

As the train leaves the station, we fall upon the sacks red faced

with pounding hearts, taking a little rest after three hours of hard labour. This will be only for a short time, until they can push in the already waiting next train.

At the other end of the hall our colleagues are already loading the sacks onto carts that takes them to the Baustelle (construction site.) A Pole collapses under a sack. It tears and some cement falls out. At this, the SS, in a bad mood, charges him with sabotage. The man is taken away, in all probability to be hanged. May be this will be his salvation. He shouted that he had suffered enough and demanded to be shot on the spot rather than have to continue like this. His family were all dead except for one small grandson who is somewhere in England. He wanted to live only to see him again, but this is not so important now. He wishes us good luck and strength. Then disappearers into one of the concrete corridors, spurred on by an SS gun.

Now the following train comes. Once more we start all over again. So it goes on twelve hours every day.

Hiding carries the risk of death. Still we try it, again and again. I use a special, well proven trick which I first learned at the other Baustelle. It is as yet little known here. I tear open one end of a sack, when the Meister (overseer foreman) isn't looking, or when I am out of sight, pour the cement out and get inside the sack. There I go to sleep. Had I been caught at this game, I would have been done for. "What difference would it have made anyway?" If fate wants to bring me home, I will get home. I dared do this only in the ninth hour of the shift. Relying on the fact that the inspectors and SS were also tired and discipline was more lax by this time.

When eventually others caught on to my prank and copied it, everyone began to be watched carefully. This was time for me to think of

something new. I would pretend to faint. The idea was that they would try everything, but I would just ramble on and "cannot" get on my feet. This idea came to me after a real incident. On that occasion my legs suddenly began to shake and I couldn't stand on them any longer. I fell upon my knees and then fainted. My whole body twitched and I was incapable of carrying on with my work. They threw water on me until I regained my senses but by then I had given up in despair and shouted at the SS, "Imagine your brothers and father beaten. Your wife and children tortured in a faraway pit." One of the OT's wife and son had been taken prisoners, so I made use of the Germans' own propaganda concerning the "inhuman enemy". This worked. The superintendent laid me down and treated me like his own son. Unfortunately he was transferred. This did not prevent me from acting out the same situation repeatedly. I would suddenly stagger, shout strange names and attempted to teach the superintendent the only math problem I still remembered, the quadrate equation. He knew some mathematics and seeing I was doing it correctly he thought I had gone crazy. I certainly didn't seem to be pretending. I simulated laughing or crying fits in between my algebra lessons. "You must be crazy!" said the overseer but the SS was smarter and merely aimed his gun at me. It's now or never! I thought. I looked him straight in his eyes and laughed, then leaping upon a loaded cart, shouted: "Now You won't hurt anyone and if you fail, you will stand up here and I will show you how to do it!" My impertinence convinced them of my insanity. I was given no work for several long days.

By the time I return, the original workers had gone. They had been exhausted. I work with renewed strength, like someone inspired. But now I have to work at the depot, running with the sacks. It is hard as

hell. I bore it for a few days. Then I broke down again.

After working for days with the cement, I finally ended up at the so called Wasserleitung (water supply), which is actually the oil pipeline. This Kommando, called the Wasserleitung Kawabau is the name of the long pipeline which was to serve the factory. We clear a broad strip through the forest for a distance of several kilometers. Cutting away dense rows of pines as we go along. When this area is cleared, we are placed in a long line, at a distance of three meters one from another and are given spades and shovels. Each one of us has to dig a trench 3 meters long, 70 centimeters wide and 170 centimeters deep. We are much happier however since this was " piece work". Diligent workers even receive a Premienschein (bonus), which we are able exchange for six cigarettes at camp. This does not mean that the job is not difficult. We have to cut off the tangled pine roots and the thick undergrowth to a depth of 50 centimeters. Then break up the rocky surface and dig a 170 cm. deep pit into the earth, which seems to be one large solid rock.

Things aren't made easier by underground water. This increases in depth, the more we dig. Slowly we are working in 50 centimetre deep puddles, by the time they finally give us rubber boots. Even this does not help very much. Our feet still get wet, but in this way we are able to spare our own boots from wear. The mud sticks to the spade. This becomes so heavy that I can hardly lift it. Each time we have to scrape off the sticky stuff which cakes on and won't come off by shaking. It is terrible, but the premium we may obtain encourages us. These cigarettes, enable us to buy a double portion of thick fat soup supplied by Feldman, a Jewish prominent in the camp.

Many people died before the dug out at the Kawabau is ready. Then we

laid down rails in the clearing we had made and the train came. It is loaded with, what seems to us enormous heavy pipes, 50 cm in diameter. We unload these through wooden slides. They clutter to the ground noisily, some even broke. One of the supervisors is swept away by a falling pipe and is taken to hospital. The same thing happened to some Jews. These are left lying by the pit till evening and then carried onto the train. By the time the journey ends, one of them is already dead and so he is thrown into a wheelbarrow. To be carted off to the burial pit. Which is filled every other day, by an ample supply of bodies from the camp.

The great work of colossal proportions which had cost tens of tbousands of lives and the health of thousands of others is finally finished. Many are left with rheumatic pains in their joints from standing in the water for long periods and can not walk. There are those who cannot stand on their feet. These are taken to the Krankenlager (Sick-camp) as a reward. More correctly known to be an extermination camp, enormous numbers died from starvation and typhoid fever in this place.

Rails have to be taken up again. We have to carry the 12 meter long rails. Now eight of us carried one at a time groaning, panting, sweating profusely, in the December or January cold. Later twelve young boys were employed for the job. The OTs beat them lustily with their whips. As they struggle under the weight of the rail. Many groups were tortured in this way and the SS for their amusement, deliberately placed short and tall boys in the same group. So one had to bend while the other had to stretch his arms on high in order to hold the rail. It was impossible to carry its weight at normal arm length in this way. The clubs were always in action and if someone falls, another

immediately takes his place from the stock of depot-Jews that never ran out.

Soon we no longer cared. We just went on moving our feet rhythmically, mechanically, in a trance. "Links.. zwo.. drei.. vier.. Links.. zwo.. drei.. vier." " Links. links." Then, "Rail down, about turn.. hold rail.. about turn.. hold rail.. lift rail.. links.. zwo drei, vier.. ". Hour by hour, day by day. But we have nothing to complain about. This is relatively easy. We arrive "home" early. We do not have to take the train to the Kawabau, we walk back to camp and it is only a ninety minute march back. Besides this, we leave the camp as late as 6 o'clock instead of 4.30. We start to walk around 7.30, instead of 7. There is a break from 9 to 9.30 and a lunch break between noon and 12.30. Lunch consists mainly of proper soup, unlike the dishwater we received at the previous workplace and sometimes there is even some noodle in the soup and a hint of grease spots. The best thing, the most important matter of it all, is we stop working at 5.30 in the evening, since there are no projectors and in the woods it gets dark earlier. Then we set out for camp and are back by 7.30. In this way we are the first for supper. For those who come from Moll or Holzmann, only arrive at 8 o'clock. If it happened to rain, we did not have to stand long in line for the food. By 8 we could already be in "bed". We had as much as 8-9 hours sleep in this way compared to five or six hours for the other comrades. All these advantages, especially the extra sleep no doubt save our lives. My work had many advantages indeed and people fought each other to take my place.

We march on asphalt or concrete roads now and my boots from home don't wear out so fast. Yes, I still have them. I always manage to find iron nails which I stick into the soles and heels to keep them in good

shape. To save them from wearing out. These boots, too, help to save my life. Whilst others had wet, muddy, frozen and purulent feet, my ankles are firmly supported and my feet remain warm and dry with the use of these boots. One day an SS takes off my boots and replaces them with his own. Although they are good quality sturdy German boots, they are not so high as my own and my feet get wet. I catch a cold and my feet became sore. I am very upset about this. Fortunately for me, my boots prove to be too small for him and he can't wear them with his thick socks. He gives my boots back on the third day in exchange of his own. This cheers me up considerably. My fine life saver boots, have returned to me again.

After some time I am transferred to the OT camp construction site. Aabout two kilometers from our own camp. We have to help to dig a ditch one meter deep for laying water pipes. Here the SS are more decent. They even let us warm ourselves by the fire they make when it become too cold. We are given thick pea soup for lunch, the OT soup. Then at 6 o"clock we can go home and have dinner at the camp. For once we are so full, that we don't even touch the bread portion. We can do without that this time.

The following day we travel by train in the direction of Moll and on. For a long time, past a fabulous castle among wonderful scenery. We end up in a building covered in mud, where we have to clean the stuff away from a beautifully ornamented hall. The job is easy, the food plentiful. A pity that this job only lasted for two days.

I am now ordered to join the camp brigade which works on the premises. We work from 9 to 5 o'clock whilst the others leave the camp to go to work. This is easy work, we are able to eat lunch and once again I am fortunate that there is plenty of food. Through luck, chance

or ingenuity, I found myself in the commando of the privileged.

Ofensetzer (stove builders) are required. I volunteer for the work being encouraged by a comrade. I am not the only one in my unit to volunteer This time it is not a trick. I am appointed to lead the gang as "Fachman" (expert). We go to our task with an air of importance about us, but also humbled for having to make the impression of experts. Although no great expertise is in fact required. We have to install stoves in the barracks and construct the chimneys.

Having seen the work of the masons at home, I try to imitate them. I tie a piece of thread on a stone and use it as plumb line. The one who urged me to volunteer, is the only one of us who has any real experience in this profession. So I "order" him to "help" me. In a short time we all learn from the "assistant" all the science needed. The chimneys are built as slowly as they would allow us. Seventy chimneys, six per day. This is a good period for all of us.

Our next assignment as builders is "drying out" the Appelplatz. An enormous ditch is dug in the middle and this is filled with different size stones. These are covered with thin sticks on top. This ditch was intended to absorb the rain, so that the whole place, which had until now looked like a swamp as a result of the constant rain, would be drained. The Lagerkommandant almost broke his leg when he fell in the mud so he ordered the work.

I kept acting as though I was "indispensable" and managed in this way to get good placements in the work gangs. One day, I find myself in the best placement of them all, the Bauern kommando (farmers commando). The kommando is sent to pick potatoes and carrots in the fields of a private farmer. The ten of us are given excellent food, milk, a large slice of white bread for breakfast, noodles for lunch, and boiled

potatoes with cheese for supper. I haven't eaten such heavenly things for months. I even keep half of the bread, potatoes and cheese in my pockets. I haven't been used to eating so much for a long time. The farmer himself is very friendly. He treats us like human beings. He tells us that he understands our suffering having often working with Jews before. He invites us to work for him the next day. He, too anxiously waited for the end of the war. The heavenly celestials it seems decided to surprise us this time.

On the following night the first snow falls. As we open the door of the barrack at dawn, we discover the beautiful whiteness. I think of the wonderful large white flakes falling - how happy these used to make us at home! Now snow means death. It means freezing. It means more suffering. Yet we tread on the snow almost reverently, silently, astonished, all of us thinking of home. I think of the last winter, a very harsh, but most beautiful one. Snow, school, the scouts, snowballs, hikes to the Mecsek mountain, winter parties, Agi. Everyone of us becomes lost in thought. The snow seeping into the shoes or soaking through cardboard imitations, brings one rapidly back to reality. The occasion makes many of the inmates contemplate suicide.

The snow cancels all privileges. White, clean, murderous snow. The work at the camp is interrupted, we are all ordered out to Moll. There I stand again from 4 to 7 under the bitter cold starlit sky. Snowflakes falling on our caps, pitter patter on the wet material. Many now tramp about in bare feet, wrapped up only in rags. There is less pushing and shoving to mount the train that morning and the blows of the capos were milder.

We march out in the snow. The sky is dark and we, Ivan, Jancsi and myself walk side by side chatting about home. We are not cold,

something warmes us from inside. Arm in arm we stick our hands in our pockets. Forget about hunger and walk along as if we were promenading down the boulevard. We chatter, which in itself is a rare thing for us to do. We talk about things at home and even about girls. This was possibly the only time during our camp life that we had time and lust for that too. This was perhaps the best day. We did not care or think of our worries and all that day we remain together. We chattering and gossip all that day with warmth in our hearts. Shared by mutual friendship.

Snow turns everything upside down. The coal wagon at Moll, stands below the natural roof of a sole tree, previously lost among the dark colours it is suddenly sharply conspicuous. Iron girders stick out everywhere, stark black, wearing white caps. Breathing vapour from my mouth, I play "trains" with a professor from Prague. We carry the iron planks playfully this time. I have no worries, for my feet are warm and dry. Those of many of the others, are damp and freezing.

In the evening I am still in a good mood and fall asleep tired, but hopeful. This was perhaps the only night in this camp when I dreamt. In my dream I am at home with my father, mother and baby brother, walking along with my pals playing snowballs with them. Those, of whose fate I was unaware of. In the morning rough hands shake me out of my reverie "Aufstehen! (Get up!) Lauskerl! (lousy brat!)." Oh, it was so good to dream! All day long I am accompanied by fragments of my dream and I refuse to believe that I have come to such a dreadful place. But hunger and the beatings force me to accept reality.

One afternoon we are sent to fix the iron nails of the struts securing the rails. Some Polish Jews are working near us. They are fairly young no more than thirty five years old. Yet they looked like a

bunch in their fifties, very old looking, bearded skeletons. One of them, a rabbi's son, from Warsaw, prays aloud to endure the pain of his sore, bare feet. He begins to shout, yell and stamp his feet. He even tears out his own hair and kicks his feet wildly. Suddenly he starts to sing. Forgetting all his pain, he dances and sings aloud some ancient hymn. He hugs the nearest tree and falls to the ground, but soon jumping up again, dances on. He has gone out of his mind. They take him away.

The tragedy moves me to a crying fit. I weep and weep and can't stop. I see myself going crazy and keep saying " we will never get home and were all going to end our lives here." I tremble and shake and can't remember anything else from this day except that I gave my supper to someone, claiming that I didn't need it any more since I was going to die.

Rumor has it, that seventeen Czechs hanged themselves in the camps during the night, five of them in our own section. One of these even in our block. We are appalled to see his body dangling in the barrack when the light go on to the order of "Licht auf" ("lights on"). I remember the tales of fat Weiss from Birkenau, about the apparatus. What kind of apparatus? This same fellow had given fat Weiss his last valuables, which he could use to buy whith a pair of good shoes. That's why this fellow hanged himself. Fat Weiss killed him.

The time comes, when we are put to work at the top of the gravel hill. Sleet is falling, the wind blows and the snow bits our faces. A small engine, puffing pulls up the gravel to the pushcarts, we fill them, push them to the mixing mashine, and tip them ower. The little stones pour out. Other pushcart is filled with cement, others bring sand and water is supplied by the installation. This place is the so

called "Oberre Kippe". There is another Kippe on the bottom of the pit, but with no engine, and the work there consists of laying concrete. The train moves away and we level the gravel. I feel terribly cold. We are anaemic and the blizzard on this naked hill top makes matters worse. Then hail starts to fall. Not much, but enough to make us soaking wet under our rags.

Work is interrupted by the air raid siren. The Germans who until now have been watching our suffering from behind the windows of a large shed, now let us in the hangar like wooden building. We make a fire and sit there silently. Huddled together, each one busy with his own worries. There are at least several hundred of us in the large construction. Suddenly one of the rabbis stands up and start to speak to us in the Yiddish, the Jewish language. We are able to understand it by now. He told us that, this day was a jewish feast day. But it is also the anniversary of the terrible devastation of the ghettos and of the horrible death of hundreds of thousands of Jews. The men who had been part of this suffering burst out crying. Each of them had someone to cry for. A father, a mother, a brother, sisters, wives, brides, and innocent children who had all passed away. We also wept, though we had suffered much less than they had.

So they told us their stories in the Yiddish language. This language resembles German. It had most probably become separated from the German language at the time when the Jews themselves were separated from the main stream of society in ghettoes. They had to abandon the soil. In every country where German Jews arrived, they came with this language, which became influenced by the local language as well and underwent changes. This resulted in the Yiddish, which became the international language of the Jews, with its dialects. This is the

Esperanto of the "Ashkenaz", (German originated) Jews. We could guess their origin by their dialects. The Poles pronounce the words with "O",the Lithuanians with "E", the Russians from their throat, those of the Carpatian Highlands have the Hungarian accent etc.

The Jews from Lodz told us about evacuations, the horror of the collecting place, the Umschlagplatz. Called after the square where the local Jews were concentrated to be transported on their way to the "final solution". They spoke about selections, when families were separated. Manhunts carried out with the help of dogs; the treachery among the population; the executions when the whole community was forced to watch. Old parents killed in their beds. Babies murdered in front of their family's eyes. Flung against the wall their brain splashed out. Rifle practice with Jews as the targets. Children, who threw themselves upon tanks with "Molotov" bottles in hand. Bearded rabbis dragged on ropes behind cars until they were "worn out". Whole communities driven into stables and simply walled in. One man was held on rifle point while his whole family, wife and four children, were drowned in a lime pit. They told us about communities driven to the river, bound together with barbed wire and drowned by the Germans, this was the work of the "Herrenvolk", each with "God be with us" written on his army belt.

Why! Why! Why had all this been done and why in this way? Who insinuated these methods? Who invented them? Who invented the experiments. To construct a van so that the exhaust fumes were emitted inside, suffocating children, women and the sick herded together within. Who instructed the executioners? Who drew up the plans and who signed the order for execution? Who carried out the instructions? At thousands of places, everywhere identically organized. Who "cleared

away the multitudes of corpses? Hid the evidence. Everything was done in the utmost "silence" and such secrecy, that no one knew of anything for sure. Or was everyone working together keeping the great secret ? Who were the multitudes who took part in all this? Rifle in hand, behind the wheel, on the edge of the pits, in uniform, or in civilian clothes, sometimes half undressed sweating from the hard work. What did they think? What did they feel while they were doing it all? While they were cleaning up. While they were resting. Did they have a good appetite? What did they dream about? What would their life be like hereafter?.

We listened to the Poles telling "stories", weeping with clenched fists and felt ourselves fortunate not to have been born a Polish Jew. We did not marvel at their egoism any more. They wanted to live at any price. They, also had a story to tell the future generations. Now we learned to understand them. We were the same. We felt like them ourselves, after seeing mountains of cadavers and the big flame rising to the clouds. A lamentation reached above the sky. May be we were remembering the purple lighting of the many Jewish souls, the warmth of the dear, living flames melting us now together to these distant brothers.

I pray that my family and those whose fate was then unknown to me would give me the strength and watch over me spiritually. Then silence reigned and the weeping calmed down. The door is suddenly torn open. Noach, "the devil", shouts into the silence: "Juden-raus!" ("Jews out!") "Verfluchte!" ("you damned!"). Not waiting for an answer he starts beating the people with his club. The Verfluchte pressed towards the door and fall outside in a heap. Noah beat away, laughing aloud, forcing us out to go on working. I manage to sneak back into the hut,

sat down and began to whistle. They didn't see that I wasn't a Kapo. Thought I am "all right", in there. The others are standing outside, freezing while the engine is being stoked. By the time the first load of gravel gets up the hill, I join them. That evening work stopped at five. Electric power is cut.

We are forced through a large pool of water in between the tracks to wait for the train which doesn't come. The SS swears and we set out on foot. Two thousand and six hundred men floundering along among stumps and stones in twenty centimeter deep mud. Through the forest we go. The SS beat us in their frustration. Some of us are pushed into the mud but somehow we all get "home". Each group in their Lagers. These SS then go into their warm barracks to wash their feet and go to supper. But for us, the kitchen is out of order and there is no supper. We are not want toprepared to walk away from the Appelplatz without something to eat. They had the food and we wanted it. Finally each of us received 100 grm. of bread and a piece of margarine to keep us quiet.

I made an agreement with my friends. To stay apart from them so as not to have to share the food we came across together. This would give us more chance, by looking for food in different places.

Rumors has it that our camp, the number 4 is to be dissolved as labour camp and turned into a sick bay. The healthy are to be moved somewhere else. We don't believe it. I go to protected custody, the "Schonung" believing that any change would only be for the worse. Though it is difficult to believe that things can get any worse than they already are now. My friend, Ivan, had acquainted himself with a Transylvanian physician named Dr. Elekes and the doktor managed to pull some strings to get me into the Rewier (Hospital).

This hospital consisted of three extremely wretched and stinking

separate barracks. As if to justify my "Schonung" (medical care), I suddenly came down with terrible diarrhea. This was the most ghastly disease that I came across in the camp. Strong, healthy people died of it in a matter of days. I soiled my only pair of pants, three times during one night. The doctor in the "Hospital" diagnosed my condition as "enteritis". The famous diarrhea, killer of thousands. It may be described as follows: the food comes out in the same state as it has gone in, accompanied by a light yellowish liquid matter. The urge to go to the "toilet" would not be felt or would be so closely followed by the bowel movement, that nothing could be done about it. In this state the man's system can not digest any of the food and the victim becomes fatally weak. The doctor explained that the disease was caused as a change in the intestines where by only the fat free food one had became used to, could be digested. Should one eat a richer food, it would immediately cause harm. I had received a big slice of bread and butter from Kato Princz, the good hearted hungarian speaking girl from Huszt, working in the kitchen. Her will was good, I had been careless. So I knew what caused my own condition.

This diarrhea absolutely ruined me. Although in my case the disease lasted only a few days, I thinned down to 30 kilos and felt extremely weak. My coat was hanging loosely on me by the time I came out of the hospital, (it was a rare exception to come out alive) but worst of all, my boots were gone. I crept around suspiciously peering at everybody's feet, until I managed to identify my boots. It cost me a lot of bread to get them back.

I was still in the Schonung when we came under the control of the executioner Kapelsbauer. The monster of Auschwitz, the selection, back in a different guise. Kapelsbauer ordered all those on the sick list to

line up, no matter how ill they were. The only people allowed to stay inside were those unable to stand upright. Living skeletons now rose from their resting places, got dressed and dragged themselves to the inspection ground. I was in relatively better shape by now and luckily my Shonung (sick) papers expired on the same day.

The sick are ordered to stand in single file and Kapelsbauer helped himself to every decent article of clothing, especially shoes. He orders me to take off my shoes, but I stand up to him, claiming I am cured and preferred to go to work. He looked me over carefully and then studied the sick book, but he didn't make me strip and let me go. I was fortunately ordered away to work, whilst my friends stood there naked shivering with cold. Then Lieutenant Tempel came out wearing his flat cap, looking immaculate and made them exercise. I saw these unfortunates from afar. When one of them collapsed, nobody was allowed to touch, let alone help him. He froze to death. They had a rough time, while I had escaped all that. Then a telefon message came and all were sent back to their places. What happened? No one knew.

Ivan is again ill. It is his turn to be sent to the Schonung, this time. I thought, perhaps I could get the opportunity to obtain some rest there as well. To be qualified, I'd need at least a high fever. In order to produce this fever, I placed a roasted potato, still hot, together with the thermometer under my armpit. I showed the doctor my high fever. This gave him a real fright. He looked at me in alarm saying that I had a fever of 42 degree centigrade. Unfortunately he gave me the thermometer a second time. I had not thought of this possibility and had eaten the hot potato. My temperature was now normal. The doctor laughed and said to me, "You figure things out very well for yourself." This was a bit shameful, but everyone has to save

his skin as best as he can.

I had not figured things out so well this time. There was another selection. All the sick were ordered to line up on the Appelplatz, naked and barefooted. Again a captain made the selection, ordering people to go right or to left. One of the groups was labelled and sent into an old barrack. That was the "mortuary". I was among them.

We were locked up for six hours. We all knew this meant the end. The guards tried to cheer us up by saying that we are only being taken into a sick camp, camp No.8. I remember having been a guard myself on such an occasion. I knew, that wasn't true. He can't know what our future will be. He is trying to raise our spirit. The Poles screamed and yelled, "That camp 8 is the crema!" They wailed in Yiddish: "Ojj, Wajj, Gewalt, men wet inz hargenen, zum Tojt gejen mir in Kamin herain!". (Oh, they will kill us, we go to die, in the oven.)" Panic broke out, many tried to escape from the barrack. Others yelled madly, tearing their out their hair. Some sweard it was Dr Mengele.

I spent the time talking to Dr. Weinberger, the surgeon from Prague. He encouraged me and I allured him, both of us humming and understanding the ohers intention. We were prepared to die. Unafraid, having faced death so many times before. I even secretly waited it.

The captain and the Kapo came and we heard the Kapo saying "some people in there are capable of work". Another selection took place. We are among the lucky ones again. The others were locked up and later taken away in a truck.

Yet it turned out, that there was indeed a sick camp numbere 8. A few later returned so called "cured". All the others had died. By this time, we were hardly getting anything to eat. Still I thought it was better that I had not gone with them in the first place.

KAPO, THE DEVIL'S PARTNER.

Food distribution always takes very long. There are not enough eating utensils to go round and for a group of 50 waiting to eat, there are only 10 to 15 of them. They came in all forms and sizes and because of the shortage of pots, we often obtained several portions in one pot. These pots were called various names. The French called them Miskie, the Poles Pushki, the jiddish Schuessly, others Menashke, and so on.

The trouble began when the Poles arrived. They used to eat slowly, wishing to prolong the pleasure of the undertaking. The Kapos, who mostly were themselves Polish Jews, wanted both to distribute the food and finish the job as fast as possible. They, by encourageing of the SS bosses always speeded up the meals, with the following cheerful, threatening invitation, "Wollt ihr fressen?!" ("Do you want to gobble it up?") They said or rather shouted this rather urgently, in an accented tone. They started, "Wollt" on a base tone of "C", "-ihr fre" went up to "D", and "E", "-ssen" was long drawn out and up to the highest notes when the voice is very threatening and even another Pole respects it. Meanwhile, if the victim did not put his "spoon" into his pocket and drink up his soup, there was nothing solid in it anyway, he was given the warning, "hapst e Petch!" ("you will receive a punch on

the nose!"), a threat that was immediately acted upon. He would be given a so called "Stup", which was a sort of slap or push, on the jaw. This would be executed in a "special pose". Thereupon the victim either dropped the utensil, or spilled it's contents. Naturally it would be stupid to protest. While the man was tottering his neighbour would take the soup and drink it. The robbed one would try to take his property back shouting: "Stip nisht, hap nisht!" (Don't push, don't grab!) Drawing out the "nisht" for emphases. A fight would ensure and the Kapo, who had been watching silently, would actively interfere. The Poles would hurl their worst oaths at each other, like, "Geharget zolste wern!" "A finstere Jur of Dir!" ("Be dead - May a dark year come upon you!") and their swearing would mingle with the sound of blows. This was the usual procedure at dinner.

A good Kapo possess the know how, of how to punch you. This has a special technique. One has to beat and to push at the same time. In other words, the Kapo pushes the victim in the face or jaw from the side, with his fist. Thereupon the later falls down, mostly in the mud, gets up, receives another on the chin, the eye, ear and anywhere else. The ear gets torn and so does the eyelid. The nose is probably also bleeding but this time, but no serious harm is done. Occasionally there will be a few broken teeth, but this is rare. If the Haftling's jaw is dislocated, sometimes the doctor is able to help to set the dislocated mandible back into place. If it is broken, he starves to death in a few days, for he cannot eat.

The Kapo's own punishment for manslaughter is "funfundzwanzig am Arsch" ("twenty five on the arse") carried out on the Appelplatz. Some Kapos endured the blows without uttering a sound, others yelled.

Kapelsbauer, the Bulldog had his own saying: "Zum fressen seit ihr

da!" ("You are here to stuff yourself only!") If he ate as little and slaved as hard as we did, his belly which protruded out in front, would quickly have diminished. He had another nasty habit. He would take away the clothes and boots of those who were hospitalized, on the general principle that "Der nicht arbeitet der soll auch nicht fressen," ("He who doesn't work doesn't deserve to stuff himself.") Those who entered the Schonung for any serious reason, would have to be prepared to die, for he would have no way to "organize" food from there.

Tempel, the spick and span lieutenant, doesn't care for us at all. He is the camp commander. He lives for himself and for women. When we, the squalid labourers march out through the gate, he stands there, immaculate, with his little dog jumping around him. There, with his legs apart, hand on hip, stick in one hand and a white glove on the other, he has all the appearance of someone straight from a fashion magazine. When the "lousy group" has finally marched away, he would laugh to himself, "Lauskerlen" ("lice"), turn his back and retreat to his abode.

I suspected that my friend is stealing my bread. Although I would put it under my head, it would disappear. Another acquaintance told me to entrust it to him, which I did. As I wanted to find out if the first was really doing the stealing. Whilst I slept deeply, my bread disappeared again while his own remained in its place, untached. But many crumbs were there. Where came the crumbs from? Now I was sure who was the thief. I wanted to put an end to this debased behaviour and I told him that I would take his bread. I made it clear to him, that if only he would stop, I wouldn't tell anybody. Even this didn't help. The bread disappeared again. After visually evident in public the

crumbs of my bread in his place, I went ahead and took his bread. My "good friend" made a big fuss about it and everyone held me responsible. He had his way because I had been so lenient to him for so long. It was too late and I now accepted the statement that, "there is no friendship, if it is not based on love, but only on self interest". If he had loved me as I loved him he wouldn't have stolen my bread. Back in Auschwitz I had given him whole portions of bread which I could have saved for myself. I had helped him in hundreds of other ways, and now he, in return was stealing from me, in an ugly manner. I broke my relationship with him, but since he had been a dearly good friend, I lost my confidence in other people. I was all alone busying myself with my own affairs, trying to forget. Thinking of and longing for my family. Their memory and the wish to see them again saved my sanity.

In desperation I ran into the kitchen in the hope of getting some thing to eat. If the SS had seen me in that place, he would have shot me on sight. The girls, who worked there gave me a "Chajnik"(portion) of thick soup", on the condition that I leave the kitchen at once. They were afraid, that their chief would lock me up if he saw me among them and all would be punished. Even the kitchen Kapo put some potato in some soup for me, on seeing my desperation. Sometimes even he, had his charitable moments. On another occasion, shielding himself from the SS with his own body and pretending to beat me, he gave me a pot of food which he had in his hand, shouting wildly, "Hau ab Mensch!" ("Off with you!") and sped me away. Now I lounged around the kitchen again, keeping an eye on the door, to see who is coming. If it was another Kapo, I ran away, but when one of the girls came, I pleaded for some food. Sometimes the Kapo surprised us from behind and would beat us

with his flexible club. This was very painful. In spite of the fact that in front of the kitchen there existed a control post for the Kapos, when they were after the girls we sometimes managed to pinch something on the sly.

When no one came out of the kitchen, those trying to obtain food would go to the window and make signs to the girls. They never complained about us, but their leader was angry and shouted, "Hau ab!", ("Be gone!"), in a haughty tone. She was even colder than the men. She shouted at us in the evenings when we waited for supper,"Aufgec, ufgajc!" ("Close up, close up!") becoming established by her phrase. She ordered us to the big barrel and hurried us on. We used to shout back at her, making fun of her if we were in the mood, with her own slogans: "Aufgez, ufgajz!" "Wollt ihr fressen?!!". "Was suchst du da, Mensch!", ("What are you seeking here, man!") "Aber schnell, jazda, jazda tak, tak, dali!" ("Hurry up quickly!"). "Aber bewegung, hapst e petch?" ("Move, or you're waiting to be punch?") We would swear too. In that way we could start a communication in almost every language, using these phrases.

Until we had lined up, or been forced into rows for going to work, the "Commando" had usually under gone a period of quarreling. That went something like this: "Antreten! ("line up!"), Wollt ihr aufgehn?" ("Would you close up?") "Achtung! - Stand still!" ("Attention!"), "Mutzen ab!- Mutzen auf!" ("Caps off! - On!") "In Gleichschritt Marsch!- Links,- Zwo- drei- vier!" "(March in step! left right two- three- four!") Aufgehen, aufgehen, aber jazda!"("Close up!- Hurry up!") When we asked for something, they shouted at us, "Aber jetzt hau mal ab!" ("Now, get out of here!")

Only the kitchen girls didn't shout. There were only a few of them

and they lived in separate quarters separated from us by wire fences. Some spoke or understood hungarian. They were a little better off then we because they had enough food. The trusties, were not so hungry as us and should have had no reason to shout. The only person we had to worry about among the women was the chief of the kitchen.

The rumor that the camp will be turned into a sick base, becomes fact. Long ditches are dug, fences erected and medical instruments such as thermometers, an instrument to measure blood pressure, syringes etc. brought in. Those, capable of work are sent away after a final careful selection. With the protection of Dr. Elekes I am found capable of work and have to leave together with Jancsi Korda. Ivan is left behind in the camp under the protection of the good doctor Elekes Before the departure we decided to make up for everything, not to part in anger.

I am transferred to camp No.1., along with several hundred of others. The name of this camp arouses fear. It meant for us Nachtschicht (night work). We march along the same concrete road we had passed so many times before. We go under the railroad bridge. The camp commander, we called him Arschloch, (Asshole) because of his little growth, receives us. The cruel little man welcomed us with the words, "Hier wird ihr schon Mores lernen! Bei mir!" ("You will learn decency here! Taught by no other than myself!").

He makes us lie on our stomach in the pouring rain. After a minute or so we are ordered to get up from the puddle, wet like a sponge, and exercise. The exercise carries on for half an hour or so. By that time, he feels we have warmed up enough to start working.

The morning before we had been awakened as early as 4.30, we were exhausted after all the excitement and the long trip. In spite of this,

they put us on night work. That meant twelve hours of carrying iron or cement. The kapos not refraining from their beating, swear at us. The sound of fighting screaming and yelling again reigns everywhere. We march out to Moll's past the glare of the projector lights.

We march, half asleep five in a row, rhythmically, numb to everything but the beat of marching boots and shuffling of shoes. This sound seems to have sent us into a trance. Joining our arms, the middle three of us sleep while we march. The road leads straight to Moll's. Woken up by the floodlit reality we have arrived. We pass the pipeline and the warehouses to the Baustelle. Since we managed to doze off a little during the hour and a half march, I feel better.

Now we are divided up into twenty groups. Ten or five people to each group under OT command. My position in the group is "fortunate". Not a chance of falling asleep in any case. A rope is tied around my waist and I have to descend on the side of the concrete dome, taking turns with my other colleagues.

I am the first to go, without questioning what will await me round the corner. The OT above my head shouts orders. My task is to straighten the girders half way from the bottom of the dome. Half suspended in the air on a rope gives me a funny feeling. Swinging at an angle of 50 degrees. I am pulled up again, like a fly, balanced on a girder. Then I am swung to the side of the iron traverses which had to be fixed by wires. Six more boys are swinging there on ropes, between the two sides of the pit, tying the iron girders which are lowered down to us.

We work like this for two hours during the long night. Fortunately the Vorarbeiter (foreman) is decent. I am drawn up and he lets me sleep until it is my turn to descend again. I have a four hour break and then

I am roused, work for an other two hours and sleep another four. I forfeit dinner at midnight, since it isn't worth eating in any case and I prefer to sleep. When the day workers arrive and the reflectors are turned off, we return to camp.

We arrive back at camp at 9 o'clock in the morning to receive yesterday's bread ration. Sleep was out the question by then. All we did was to pry around after "dinner". We sleep till 4 then get dressed and stand an hour and a half in line for inspection.

Next morning we return from work at 8.30. This time the bread was given to us at work at midnight or before going "home".

Living conditions at the camp are bad. The barracks poorly constructed and rain pours in. The cramped place is always damp and smelly. When we are all inside, the steam coming from our damp clothes makes everyone sick.

I bore the routine at Moll's for a week or so, and then on a snowy stormy night came down with pleurisy. I had to give up everything. I knew, I would either starve to death, through being unable to stand in line for food; or be put in the sick camp,(a Vernichtungslager) and freeze to death as the barracks in those camps were unheated and very draughty. Patients lie there naked, between a couple of wet blankets which are both filthy and covered with lice and bedbugs. They starve. This is where I landed up. Still I can't say I was unlucky. Lying there naked between the wet blankets was better than going to work at Moll's until death. Carrying on with the cement work would have killed me in any case.

REWIER VERNICHTUNGSLAGER

K.L.D. L.B.K. L.4.

I don't know how, but I managed to return to Camp number 4, together with a hundred and twenty of my companions. The place had completely changed. One half was occupied by severely ill patients, lying side by side; the other half by the weak or slightly ill. Owing to my pleurisy, I was taken to the part of the camp containing the severely ill. We were first taken to the Schonung, in block 64, where the famous Greek, Jaquot commands. He took an immediate fancy to my boots. Jaquot persuaded me that people's shoes are taken away where I was going and he offered to "guard" them for me and give them back when I returned. He introduced me to his friend Motika, an other Greek Kapo who promised to bring me food every day which Jaquot would provide in return for the service of my boots. I tried to resisted his offer, but nothing helped. He insisted and threatened me, so that I had to surrender my boots again. I did this with a heavy heart. I was stripped naked and wearing wooden clogs was sent to barrack 36, along with Jancsi.

Slush and rain poured in the barrack. We lay naked under the lice infested blankets, whilst the hard wood of the so called "bed", blistered my sides.

Every morning five or six dead bodies were carried out of the

barrack, which was inhabited by fifty inmates. New ones came to take the place of the dead, a never ending stream of newcomers.

I didn't take my illness too seriously, inspite of the fact that I was often on the threshold of death. Something in my chest was tearing and pulling me apart. In spite of this, I staggered out towards the kitchen, wrapped only in a single blanket, stumbling along in wooden clogs. Kato, her name is Kato Princz, born in the Carpathean village of Huszt, always let us have something to eat. She was a friend of Jancsi, and he introduced her to me. When later Jancsi came down with typhoid fever, through her I was able to supply him the same service. She was very good hearted and would look out for us from the kitchen window, to see if we were coming. She always gave what ever she was able to spare.

Jancsi accused me of eating out of his soup the fragments of potatoe while he was bedridden. In fact I always brought him everything that Kato gave for his behalf. In the end Kato herself had to make the peace between us.

One day the kitchen ran out of firewood. The cook told the SS we have to go fetch some, if we wish to continue to eat. Sick people are dragged out of their "beds", dressed only in cotton summer clothes and sent into the cold.

We march a few kilometers, through the snow, some of us barefooted, our legs wrapped in tattered rags. I have no shoes now, for Jaquot refused to remember and fulfill his promise to return my boots. I saw one of the girls in the kitchen wearing them, but she also refused to give them back, claiming that she needed them herself. In any case I had no right to claim them from her, because she had no idea who I was.

Jaquot had given me two good portions of soup after our agreement,

but then stopped sending me anything, forgot his promises. Eeven that was now a long time ago. The girl gave me a third of a loaf of bread out of sympathy, which in itself was of great value. But the lifesaver boots remain with her. I had no choice. I took rags, wrapped them around my feet, thrust them into my wooden clogs and bound onto these more rags held in place with wires. Hoping that in this way my feet would kept warm and dry.

We stumble along in a track trodden down by the first in line. This at least, saves me the effort of stumbling through the virgin snow. Finally we arrive at our destination.

We are amazed and shocked. Stump and tree roots weighing between 25 to_30 kilogramme are put on our backs. We are supposed to carry them. We can hardly support this weight. I discover how weak I have become through illness and lying down without working. Not long ago I ran up the hill with sacks of cement weighing 50 kilogramme on my back and now I shake all over under a piece of wood weighing only half that weight. We march back to the camp through the deep snow.

When we arrive it turns out, to be the wrong camp and we return to the seemingly endless desert of snow. One of our comrades falls down and remains where he lies. He is shot. Then gradually the gap between us becomes larger and larger, but we keep going. No sign of our camp. Even the railway tracks, are gone. There is just the feeling of the heavy weight on our backs. The SS keep driving us on. Bawling at us but they stop beating us. They need the wood. Three men are already unable to carry anything but themselves. The soldiers, who are behind us, continually fire over our heads to encourage us. They keep up the pace. In spite of their warm clothes they too are cold, . The bullets whistle around us. Now, however, they are more careful not to hit one of us and

redeem us from the suffering. So it seems that we are sentenced to a life of wandering in this desert of non ending snow. Zigzagging, trying to avoid the ditches.

"Here are those same damned tracks again!" It seems we have been going round and round in such a way that we will never reach our final destination. We glance at each other. Have we come here to freeze to death? At last we stop circling and see a forest in the distance. I stagger on weeping. My snow covered feet are by this time very sore. The pain ceases after a little bit and I no longer feel my feet, which are now numb and stiff like a piece of wood.

The rail tracks appear as if out of no where. Half an hour later we are back in camp. We take the wood to the SS quarters, they must have warm rooms and hot water. Heated with the blood of our frozen brothers lying out there in the snow!

In the barrack I rub my blue swollen feet, which become painful again. I am happy, pain means feeling my feet again! I massage them and it works! After several hours I can stand on them. It is a miracle!

The next day the same procedure is repeated. Wood burns fast, if the SS keep their fire going day and night. This time we are more experienced and finish the work in half time. Yesterday's desperation does not return and there are no victims this time.

I manage to stay at the camp to collect the rubbish, since I have no shoes. I gather up the rags lying around and strip the dead of their clothes. I remember how I had feared corpses at home. Now I see the dead as the quietest, most peaceful people on earth. They all looked you in the eye openly, smiling. Though they didn't like their clothes to be taken away - all stiff. So my job goes on till noon, but not one pair of properly fitting shoes did I find.

I pass along the wires of the women's camp. One of the women looks on with pity and asks me if I have no shoes? I tell her my story about Motika and the kitchen girl. Out of pure luck she happens to be a good friend of Motika's kitchen girl. So I get my shoes back at last, "because they were too heavy for the girl and she received other shoes from Motika". I am sure this was not true, but for me it is of no difference, I am happy with my shoes. The woman treats me as if she was my mother. Yet I have another problem now. I am growing. Although I pretended not to notice this, the shoes begin to be too tight for my growing feet. My nails are beginning to hurt.

The woman I met previously, sent her daughter to the fence to give me some string instead of the original leather laces which had been taken away. It was a rare miracle, that this girl had not been separated from her mother. I began to meet the daughter by the fence every day after this. We stand there until some Kapo comes on the site and then we have to disappear. The girl is a little older than me. She and her mother are French. My many private French lessons at home, which I arranged secretly against my parent's wishes, in order to please Agi's piano teacher, the French teacher's good friend, now stood me in good stead. I had liked the language. Now I could make myself understood. I manage to be by the fence every evening, where the French girl always waits for me with something to eat. With the help of the food they give me, which sometimes even contains pieces of potatoes and other nutrients, I slowly regained some of my strength.

In Block 39, my old Block, a Stubendienst (barack service) is required. I volunteer, and am accepted. Sandor Teichmann, the previous Blockaltester died of typhoid fever. The new one is a doctor of medicine who needs an assistant.

LICE TYPHOID AND DEATH.

There is an epidemic of typhoid fever and within a week nearly everyone is effected by it. Hardly twenty or thirty healthy inmates are left. My little friend didn't come to the fence for two days. She was also down with it.

The disease consisted of sudden fever with a temperature of about 39 centigrades. Loss of consciousness follows and delirium. The eyes roll in their sockets, the appetite is lost and nothing can be taken in but liquids. For this there is a constant craving brought on by the fever. Drinking is forbidden.

Every night skeleton like half conscious people stagger around in the camp. Like ghosts, slowly, creeping about in an enchanted palace. Each one looking for their long dead relatives and friends. Raving. Some had to be forced not to go to the mortuary to look around. Many froze to death.

We are infested with lice. The lice suck our blood and infect us with the blood of the sick. At first they attempt to isolate the sick blocks from the others, but later give up any hope of trying to stop the spreading of the disease. It is very contagious. We are given honey and sugar instead of cheese and Wurst (sausage), because the inmates cannot chew the latter.

Lice. Everyone is overrun with them. Sometimes, when the Haftling takes off his cap, his head is white with them. When a person died, lice left his body and moved on to his clothes. After the clothes of one of the dead were thrown down by the stove, the lice started covering the black coat, which became first grey and then turned quite white. On looking closer, I saw layers of lice swarming over it. They were attracted to the warmth coming from the stove and covered the coat completely.

These lice undermined what remained of our life and caused endless suffering. We are full of purulent wounds. We try to bandage the wounds but they swell up below the bandage and become extremely painful. We are covered with hard, swollen, painful boils causing agony. I myself have such a black swelling in my right armpit. It keeps growing till it reaches the size of an apple. I can't move my arm and I have to hold it stiff and immobile. To lie on the wood becomes a torment. When I can no longer bear it, I hold a wire in the fire and puncture the swelling. Pus squirts in all directions, the pain ceases and the swelling goes down. Fortunately a kind Dutch doctor bandages my arm properly with a torn shirt and covers it with some ointment which helps it to heal.

Leon, the Czech, is a two meter tall giant. Strong as a bull, good tempered and always happy. An optimistic type. Every morning he is the first to get up and shouts the command: "Aufsthen, Ufstajn, Betten machen!" ("Get up! Make the beds!") This meant to air the blankets and to clean up the surroundings. He becomes infected. Even in his sickness he moves about, carrying food, distributing it, helping others and fighting to survive. Then his temperature suddenly climbs above 39 degrees. He became delirious and remains lying on the wood with his

feet dangling over the end. On his wood he wasted away to a terrible state. His eyes roll. He raves about his wife. Within six or seven days his thighs are rubbed as raw as beef steaks from the rough wooden plank serving as his bed. There is no straw even for Leon. The wound grows to three times the palm of his hand in size. Then his whole back became covered. He is turned over on his belly to prevent his wound from spreading further. So the poor man lies there, helpless, as thin as a skeleton. Owing to his previous strength, even in this condition and after such suffering he lasted several days lying on his belly on the hard plank. As he lay dying he still kept saying," Ich will leben!" ("I want to live!"), Ich will nach Hause gehen!" (" I want to go home!"). He lay dying in this way for three more days. Then he passed away.

The religious jeweller from Sziget district, I can't remember his name, earned plenty of money through his profession. A strong and sturdy man who could help out with the hard work. He was fortunate enough to remain together with his 19 year old son. Now he could not manage to drink the thick of his soup or swallow the bread. He becomes so weak, we have to support him on both sides in order for him to go to the lavatory. Then his strength leaves him so that it is too much for him even to do that. He becomes very thirsty. He asks his own son to fetch tap water from the washroom, but his son refuses to do it. He offers him some bread in exchange. Then the son goes out and comes back with a tin filled with a liquid. The father complains about its funny taste. It turns out, that his son sold him his urine to drink. The jeweler dies. May be from sorrow.

My neighbour, a seventeen year old boy from a little transilvanian village, Mojse, is also sick. He talks all the time about food. How to

drink hot milk with a cold dish called mamaliga or hot mamaliga with cold milk. The possibility of improving the taste with something called "Puliska" is also discussed when he is in a better mood. He asks for water and I quench his thirst. He also tries to give me his bread for doing this, but I refuse. He can't understand me. He looks at me, in disbelieve that I did not help him in order to receive bread and probably thinks I do not know how to stand up for my rights. He did not take into account that I, who am now Stubendienst, have enough bread for myself by this time. An other day he accuses me in stealing his food and names me "the friendly thief".

One of the Stubendiensts, the kind Lithuanian Lipschitz, also dies. We are sorry. He suffered so much. His wife was raped by a group of Germans in front of his eyes. His small child was thrown against the wall spilling out his brains. His beautiful, nineteen year old daughter had been taken away and nothing more was heard of her. He always treated us youngsters as if we were his children. Now he is dead.

There is a redheaded, red bearded little thin Jew named Katz from Huszt. He is naked all the time. His things had been stolen. He was the first to think of using an empty tin as night pot. He claimed himself to be so rich at home that he visited his barber every day to have his hair cut. He also dies.

Mr. Gellert, the cobbler, another neighbor on the planks, a thin and small Jew, goes the same way. The typhoid had sent him crazy. Given a piece of cheese he put it in his mouth, chewed it, then spat it into someone's face.

Who would inform the family in Kaposvar, about the three Blum brothers? One of them died of pneumonia. The second brother, declaring there was no point in living without his brother, died as well on the

following morning. Only one day later, when he calculates the portions of the bread became smaller, the third said that this is not a way to live, we won't go home and the rest of the family are undoubtedly dead. That he had given up expecting anything from life, so he also died. He was found dead in the morning lying motionless in his place.

Another comrade of us, Mr. Mehes the farming officer from Transylvania caught the disease. He used to eat so silently, no one could hear. He died silently. He was found in the morning on his plank, his shoes and foot cloth remaining under his head as he had arranged them, smiling to himself in his death.

My own case of fever was very mild. I had a slight temperature and the danger was over. I had been fortunate to be vaccinated in the ghetto. However, to live or to die became more than ever a matter of decision. If one makes up one's mind to live, one's resolution, strong will and the power of auto suggestion might keep him alive. The weakest depended for life or death on spiritual strength. Physically we should already have been dead.

We are hungry as homeless dogs. Hunger makes people able to do indiscriminate things.

I described before how in Auschwitz, famine effected behaviour. This however was not Auschwitz. Here in Dachau, things were different. Here the privileged obtained more. In the labour camp, we obtained the so called food by standing in line. Here only with "protection" can one stand in line twice or even three times. Once a Kapo shouted and swore at me and pushed me into the line without anyone noticing the deception. This was a friendly Kapo. It was my third time and I gained 36 potatoes through his crafty act. Maybe he confused me with a friend of his.

Once I was so hungry, that I stood up to the kitchen-SS and was impertinent enough to say: "Please Mr. Cook I am so hungry. I beg you to give me something to eat!" He could have struck me dead, instead he took me to the cook pot and and gave me a double portion of potatoes. On another occasion, when I tried to sneak into line this same SS noticed me. He gave me a blow this time so that I fell down. I was picked up again but he gave me another punch so that I fell once more. This was repeated about four times until my nose began to bleed. This made him really mad. He kicked me and shouted, pulled off my coat and ordered me to pick up fifty plates. I disappeared into the blocks where they had finished eating and came back carrying fifty plates. Then he asked me, "Why did you try to join the line again?" "Because I am hungry." I said. He pushed me into the line and shouted to tell him if I was hungry but not to cheat. He was right! But how would I know who I could trust? He stood there until my turn came and gave me a rich portion with many pieces of potatoes. in my opinion he was an exceptionally decent SS at that moment. Although he showed his hate for Jews by tormenting, starving and killing, in every possible way, he also had attacks of kindness and this was enough to make him a decent SS fellow in my eyes.

We are so hungry that while at work pulling the cart, we pick up cabbage leaves and frozen, inedible objects from the road to chew. We would gather food waste from roadside ditches and trash piles, carrot stumps, turnip peelings or thrown away garbage which we gnaw at voraciously. How tasty they were! One of the boys once saw a small piece of bread lying in the ditch and rushed to pick it up. The dog belonging to the camp fuhrer was set loose on him. The hound sunk his teeth into the boy. He tore pieces from his flesh, until he lay

motionless and died on the spot from loss of blood. The dog received the rinds of bacon which the SS ate. We envied the SS's dog. One day a car ran it over on the way back to camp. Fate is curious.

Hunger also made us pick mushrooms to eat. Some of us were poisoned in this way. Zilberstein, of my barrack was one of those who died of mushroom poisoning, as well as Lichnitz a rich Dutch merchant who had supplied wild animals to the most famous circuses in Europe. My neighbour, Dr. Wiener, a well known professor became sick and weakened. He could not continue to work at the required tempo, which gave an excuse for an SS soldier, who had his eye on the doctor's many gold teeth for a long time, to beat him to death.

Mushroom eating was only the beginning of our trouble and caused misfortune for relatively few. The real trouble started when camp number 4 was turned into a "Kranken Rewierlager", an "extermination camp".

At the end of February, when the snow was thawing we volunteered to carry firewood. Though it was very strenuous work, in this way we could eat oak leaves which we gathered on the way. We filled our pockets with leaves selling them cut and dried to the privileged at camp. We ourselves smoked them too, to alleviate our hunger. Suddenly every leaf became edible "sorrel". We ate up everything, even the dirty, dusty, muddy grass growing at the side of the barracks, using a feeble excuse to cover up the fact that we had been reduced to such a state.

By loitering around I would often manage to come by something from the kitchen. I would sneak away from Holzmann kommando by hiding in the corner of the bathroom behind the iron ladder. They couldn't see me there. When the noise of commands and fighting had died down, I knew the others had gone and I could come out. Then I would steal a large

log from yesterday's firewood and carrying it as if on duty to the Block. I would give it to the doctor to use for firewood. He in return, kept quiet about my truancy. The rest of the time I would lie back in my place on the bunk waiting for an opportunity to go to the kitchen to beg for food.

Coal was brought one day. It was piled in a fenced area between the two kitchen buildings. The Haftlings would cut through the wire and steal some coal. In return for several pieces the doctor of my barrack promised me a portion of bread. So I also went to steal. He cheated me however and refused to pay in return. He disliked me for being so crafty in always obtaining food. However I was not perturbed. I managed to sell it to an other block, receiving even more food than the doctor had promised in the first place.

The stealing of coal only went on for a couple of days. After this the SS got wind of what was going on and kept a sharper eye on the coal. One of the watchtowers equipped with a searchlight would train the light on the dump and the guard would shoot anyone approaching the coal at night. During the daylight we couldn't steal it because of the Kapos. If after all, we still managed to procure some coal, we would eat it, having heard that it could cure diarrhea.

We lived mostly on hope, so when the news was broadcast of President Roosevelt's death, the atmosphere in the camp became very gloomy. Our leaders sat down to discuss the new developments very excitedly: "Never mind!" they said and reminded us of Nurenberg, Brenner, American and British progress and the Berlin and Russian situation. A newspaper found its way into the camp. There were rumors of a spy among the SS. The newspaper wrote of the glorious resilient withdrawal of the German forces and claimed that all contact had been broken with the enemy.

They are running away so fast that the "enemy" cannot follow them fast enough, was our interpretation. This change brought change for us, too. We were given a new Rewiercommender, "Big Elekes." There were two Dr. Elekes now. A tall one from Lithuania, and a short one, hungarian speaking, Ivan's patron. In the doctors block there was an other Lithuanian doctor, Dr. Perez, a good and polite man. When he was unable to supply us with medication he always comforted us with consoling words. Sometimes this helped us more than the medication itself could have done. He stood about in the empty block, with sorrow showing on his face, wearing his big, dark coat, fur cap, his hands in pocket. He had given away the last Tanalbin tablets, he had in the ward for stopping diarrhoea.

From the Germans' behaviour we could feel that something was amiss. One morning there was an alarm in the camp. A German physician captain was there and they kept shouting through their loudspeakers, "Blockaltesters antreten!" ("Block superiors line up!"). Our Blockaltester changed clothes or rather stripped and lay down among the sick. We soon understood why. They took out all the able bodied people to work. Even the women were taken away from the kitchen. Their haughty supervisor, Manci, the "aufgets" screamed hysterically. She didn't matter much to us but we were sorry for the others. Poor Kato Prinz from Huszxt was also going. There would be no more extra food from the kitchen, but we were genuinely sorry for her, regardless of what would happen with the food.

Rumors had it that the camp was being evacuated. We knew what this meant, running away from the chance of being liberated at last. The Kapos were smart. Shouting, "Stubendienste antreten!" ("Block workers stand in line!") They caught their assistents and ordered them to

change places with them, making up the numbers until it was the same. The scoundrels, the real murderers were hiding themselves among us at our expense. Janowich the "Verteiler" ("Food distributor"), the worst scoundrel of them all, would have wanted the camp to remain for two more years. He had never had it so good at home and was dying to stay with us. So was little Jaquot and Alex, the Hungarian born Frenchspeaking killer. Frici and several of the scum of the camp also stayed behind. Some of them did this in order to be with the women. Among them, were Blockaltester Jaquot the bigger, who once took my boots and the good hearted Bernat, who wanted to live with the nice, hearty, kind Annuska.

Now the kitchen is run by men and they give us nothing. New, sick people are brought to the camp. Some of them are dying. Some had died on the way and arrived dead. These went straight to the mortuary. All had been evacuated from an other camp and they informed us about the horrors they had endured on the way. They were made to march mainly bare footed, 40-50 km. at night. In their weakened condition, they were forced to carry the boxes of ammunition for the SS. They had marched only by night and during the day they had been crammed into barns or stables where they could neither sleep nor rest. They had had practically nothing to eat. We knew we would all soon be in the same boat. We had no idea how long we had left.

Our own portions of food were gradually diminishing. The loaves were becoming smaller. First fifteen, then twenty people had to share a loaf between them. Apart from this, we had nothing to eat. We were starving. Some would strangle their neighbors at night if they suspected them of having some bread. They would pick dirty muddy rotten potato peelings out of the gutter. I and two Czechs climbed into the kitchen through

the wide latrine pipe only to maimly find some rotten frozen potato bits, which we then washed grated and made into soup, with very few whole good potatoes.

The number of dead was constantly growing. They were so light that a strong man could pick them up with one hand. But... but we could hear the canons from afar. We waited hopefully and starved. Then the first starving man appeared with a piece of meat. He chewed it and seemed to be quite satisfied. It was O.K. It was good roasted meat. I vomited instantly. Others followed his example and chewed the bloody sinewy human flesh! This was the beginning of our struggle with ourselves, for ourselves. The human flesh itself, had now become a temptation. This disgusted us. Our senses, our feeling of dignity, our morals, our educational principles, the basis of our religion, all of these were under attack. We were horrified and frightened by our own reaction. We didn't speak about it. We were defeated and silent.

LAST MONTH AND FIRST HOURS.

More transports came, with some familiar faces among the many strangers. I recognized Pista Dick and Singer, whom I had last seen in Auschwitz. Everyone else I had left in Auschwitz is dead, they said.

Dr. Jozsef Wallerstein, the beloved, skilled child physician, a kind hearted man, who had adored his daughter and wife, died of typhoid fever. He was covered in sores, starved and thinned down to the bones. It must have been very painful for him before he died, as his sores had been infested with thousands of lice.

Tomi Kisfaludi had been transferred to Mauthausen. He was so poor in health that it was dubious if he could be counted on to survive.

Robi Bricht, returned from inside the Crematorium itself. He was in the childrens blocks in Birkenau, saved by an unique selection for fifty inmates needed immediately. Which Mengele ordered when he happened to be there. Robi was seen alive but sent somewhere to a hard kommando.

Miki Lobl ended up in a transport with one hundred and eighty persons

to a wagon. When there was no more place to cram anyone inside, the Germans threw more people on the top of the crowd. He died when he ran out of energy to stand on his own feet and was then trampled to death.

Jozsi Krausz was in another camp. It was heared a few weeks ago by one of us that he is alive.

We knew about the death of the following:- Tomi Strenger, Andris Kozma, Egon Lowi, Mr. Schreiber, Wili Schwarz, Jancsi Krausz, Laci Burger, Laci Lustig, Oszi Weisz, Ivan Blum and Dr. Zoltan Wallenstein, the well known "big" rabbi from Pecs. Among those probable dead were: Ivan Wallenstein, Tivadar Steiner, Sandor Lukacs, Gyorgy Weiss, Armin Belinko, and Gabor Wortmann. These were among my closest friends. Who knows how many of the women would survive the tremendous tribulations? Most of our friends went to the ashes, the man on the russian front died in the minefields.

Dr. Kellermann and his son had arrived in camp. At first, before they turned up, we knew nothing of their presence. Then the doctor became block physician and for this we all owe him a great deal. He kept reassuring us that we would make it home. In his duty as block physician he examined every patient carefully.

Eventually he caught typhoid fever himself. He struggled hard for a long time, until he lost his will power. Then covered in sores he saw no point in struggling any longer. Having lost his will he died. His son went crazy with grief. Poor Pista, after having gone through so much suffering together to see his father die in front of his own eyes. We buried the father crying and at the same time saying with indifference, "This one too!" " He did not deserve it!"

Another transport arrives. A familiar face enters or rather staggered into the block. I cried out and sat up on my wooden plank, which I

would normally do now only at the sight of food. The effort was too great in my present condition. I cried out, "Tomi!" Indeed it was Tomi Ronai. Alas, we had both forgotten how to smile. Our faces wore a mere twisted grin. He frightened me. It was as though his own death mask was coming towards me. We kissed and hugged and couldn't have been happier. He was like my own dear brother, someone I could talk to, the only one that remained of the old "Hawks". Tomi spoke. He even had some good tidings. He had been at a wonderful place near Berlin, where the food was great and had such items as "pasta noodle soup" and other treats. However he also told me of several deaths, slaughter and terror. He described the horrors of evacuation, the migration on foot, along the bank of a river. They had not been allowed to drink. So they dug with their spoons in the ground until as a miracle they succeeded to dig a well and drank lying on their bellies. I was really very glad however that we had met again. When he came he brought with him part of my old life and my home. He had known me for so long and we were very close friends. I felt now that his coming was like a present for both of us. He would protect me against fate.

We used to lie at the side of the barrack on the grass. It was spring and nature was very beautiful. Our young souls were able to enjoy spring even there and then. We remembered and wept. We would forget our cares a little, draw morse signs into the dust, or laugh together. We remembered the people from home, school, our teachers and the many many friends who did not exist any more. His father who was fortunate to die before the German occupation, was spared all of this. He told me about Agi, whom he knew before I did. She was his classmate from the beginning.

After a few days, one night, Tomi suddenly felt very sick. He

demanded water. We had only the tap water, which it was forbidden to drink. Water would mean death for him also. Yet he shouted, "Give me water..." "I'm dying...I want to live...oh!," and then died.

After the death of Tomi I collapsed completely. My last good friend, whom I had loved. My consolation, was gone. Yesterday we were playing in the grass and now he was dead! Oh God! Is this worthy of you, of that which people adore in You? Oh "god!" You are merciless! But I thought further, why am I crying? Is it because of Tomi? Or is it because of myself? Am I not an egoist, who needed him only in order to console myself? Didn't I use him for myself as a refuge from reality? To be able to forget? I felt guilty. I should have been aware that in his condition, death was more than a possibility? I saw it in his first grin! I must be thankful to Tomi for coming here to remind me of my duties.

The next day I got up from the planks, and volunteered for the Totenkommando (death commando). I accompanied him, pushing the wheel barrow to carry Tomi to his grave. Oh, how many times had I followed this unsigned road! We dug a big hole every four or five days and slid the corpses in. Tomi had ended his race, between and together with these unknown brothers, in the big competition.

I don't know what happened next. I don't remember how, or even if we closed the grave, nor the way back to the camp. I was out of my mind with grief. It must have taken a long time till I came to. I only remember some vague gaps in that hazy time. It must have been days, or perhaps weeks before I came back to my senses. I don't know who cared for me, or had I acted the necessities by my own senses? I lived.

The kitchen had once again run out of coal. I was supposed to go and fetch firewood. I went to the Schreibstube and asked to be transferred

to another block. This was possible, only no one was aware to it. But I was crazy. At first I wanted to go to number 15, where Ivan was, but as I was considered crazy and Ivan remembered the bread scandal very well, he didn't want to have anything to do with me. Perhaps my being crazy was only a disguise.

J. H, who works in the kitchen promised Ivan, to see to it that I would not be transferred to his block, since I mean trouble. In this way he would not need to share with me the food given to him. I end up in block 15, with Pali Weisz, who arrived there from camp 7, when that camp had been evacuated. I must have been in a state of confusion, because I can't remember exactly when all this happened. Apparently the Germans concentrated all the sick from the surrounding camps into Lager 4.

H. supplied Pali Weisz with food as well, but strictly forbade him to share it with me. I would have starved, had it not been for my conviction which gave me my moral strength. I, clearly like a mad man, stuck to my belief in the liberation. In being reunited with Agi. I must see her!

Everyone would beat and kick me. They loathed me because I was the most scabby of them all. I, being "crazy" just smiled and laughed at them and everything. With a kind of animal patients, I refused to lose my temper. I was apathic. Since I was able to manage food.

The hunger has become unbearable in the camp. Desperation loosened discipline. Every day inmates would grate and eat the rotten potatoes scraped out of the sewer of the SS kitchen. They come to blows at the sewage over the privilege to pick out these potato peels. As for me I just stand there laughing. I am amused. I sometimes sit for hours on end, watching the fighting and enjoy the Kapos going about their

beating. I sit near the fire in the barrack, where people would sometimes offer the mad man something. I refused their offer a couple of times, so everyone believed I was really crazy. Who in his right mind would refuse food!

A new transport came and miracle of miracles, a gift parcel from Switzerland arrives. Everyone receives a tin of sweet condensed Nestle's milk and the under 16 year olds obtain one C and B vitamin tablet. Some sell them immediately. I manage to get 4 or 5 of these tablets. "These will keep me alive." I say, as usual.

Now something happen that moved me very deeply. The Lageraltester decided to produce a cabaret. The Stubendienst called us to go to the Appelplatz. There all who were able to move, were gathered together and sat on the ground. We watched the fat Greek Blockaltester play the role of a ballerina. The pot bellied man, complete with brassiere, high heeled shoes, painted face, with his crude movements and voice imitating the ballerina, was perfect for me. Then came the miracle. Suddenly there was an accordion player and a beautiful voice singing, funikuli funikula, Solveig's song and other tunes. A violinist plays excerpts from Carmen and from Lehar's operettas. The performance ended with a little speech by the Lagereltester. All enjoyed it now.

I could not hear anything longer! I was torn with a terrible fit of crying. The happening cracked open a weak point of the shell I had been wearing. The classical tunes, the songs, the jazz etc., broke my resistance, at least partly. After my fit, I started to think. I slowly came to my senses. I saw where I was and seeing this more soberly only caused pain. I wanted to sink back into my oblivion.

I felt no hunger. I even loaned Pali Weisz a hunk of bread. I put my trust in him. But it's easy to deceive a person who is crazy. He had

a friend from Budapest. We three together, bought a tin of canned milk from the red cross gift parcels and sold it. He sold it for five servings of soup, three for him and two for me. He ate the thick sediment of the soup and gave me one serving of water. I must have been really crazy to put my trust in a person like that.

I saw that while we were starving, the Blockaltesters were having the time of their lives with the kitchen supervisors. People were starving to death daily, while they were feasting their hearts out. They would give soup containing nothing but water. Keeping for themselves the kilogrammes of potatoes and other ingredients from the bottom of the pots, which were meant to feed a hundred men. I saw Janowics, sneaking into the corner with a plate full of choice bits. He convinced even his relatively decent but weak brother to steal from us. Then, someone informed on him. The Kapos led on by their leaders the "prominents" came to inquire about the identity of the informer. The informers were not afraid to admit what they had done. When the "investigation committee" left, however Janowits started to beat the informers. No one dared return the blows. He was so strong. Later he was denounced again. This time the scoundrel did not dare to beat up the informer. For he was himself degraded.

We are starving. Our 20 gram "melted butter" portion, the so, called Schmalzbutter, contained mainly fat, the bread had little caloric value and the soup was mostly warm water. Sometimes some small pieces of equally watery potato peelings are swimming in it as if stuck to the surface of the soup. Later, we don't have even that much. People would eat grass, nettles, "mushrooms" and in the end resorted to eating human flesh. The Kapos grew more and more savage. Max, the infamous "battering ram" would hit out like an animal. He broke the jaw of one

of the Frenchmen. The poor fellow no longer able eat, died after a few days. Max was publicly flogged for this. The usual 25 on the backside for a Kapo. This was thought to be sufficient punishment for manslaughter, for a person of his standing.

No one is allowed to come within two meters of the fence. The guards open fire on anyone that close.

Some Poles are ordered out to dig ditches. None of them come back.

Since we buried Tomi I remained in the Toten kommando. In this way, learning from the Germans, we take some gold teeth from the dead ourselves. Little did we know, that the SS had put an eye on a Haftling with many gold teeth. When he died, they found the teeth were missing from the cadaver's mouth. As punishment, we, including myself, are literally put out to the fields to graze. We are there several days, with nothing to eat besides the grass, if we could find even this. Now we are no longer shocked when we see someone eating human flesh. Nothing now surprised us. Even if the earth were to split open and swallow us or if "manna" fell from the sky. Alas! The "manna" did not fall and another few more of us are dead. The dead field is strewn with cadavers. Those left from the Totenkommandos, are so weak, they can hardly move. The new Totencommando gathers them up and we are finally confined back in the camp and "fed".

The next day, we regain some of our strength and again we are set to work. Four SS come with the group. Today the commando is larger, in spite of the usual number of dead. When we finish digging a large new ditch we are ordered to stand facing the old one, which is already filled up. So, that is it! I decided to jump as soon as I hear the first shot and risk being buried alive. I heard of cases, who survived by climbing out in this way later. I haven't much time to day dream

about these things either, because the shots began to ring out. I feel a slight blow on my left arm and fall into the pit. I lay motionless. The next group came. The Germans come to the rim of the pit to examine the contents, but go away ordering the next group to take their position at the edge of the pit.

I can feel my arm now. It wasn't even broken but merely shot through and bleeding a little. The next and last group of executed fall on top of us. One of them, hitting me hard on my back with his dangling arm. I am still breathing.

Now it has become evening. The time for the Germans to finish the work and close our pit. But it turns out that there is no lime left in the little hut to pour on us. I can hear the soldiers discussing this problem in a starange language. They are under seemingly strict orders not to cover the pits without covering the bodies with lime first. It darkens. There is not much time left. They must decide what to do. Finally, these Ukrainian Germans go away, probably to fetch the material. Leaving the Kapo in command. When their voices fade, the Totenkommando near by, prepares a fire and sit around it. Two of us then climb out of the pit and wait between the trees. We don't have to wait for very long, the Kartoffel kommando passes nearby. Tired, exhausted befrightened inmates, they heard the shots, and are afraid. Their job is to dig trenches to bury potatoes, or to take out potatoes out of the old ditches. It began to rain. In the dusk, drizzle and confusion we manage to infiltrate the group. From afar we can see one of the SS with some Totenkommando covering our grave. Some of those in there are still alive!

We return to camp past the sleepy dozing guards in the rain. Neither of us said a word.

I, naturally do not volunteer any more to be in the Totenkommando. My wound healed miraculously. It wasn't even painful. The fellow, who had escaped with me had been shot in his shoulder and it was very difficult for him drag himself around. As far as I know, he remained alive.

Later, there is a rumor that there has been a dispute between the Germans about the fact that they carried out this act, from which I was so fortunate to escape. Was it done because there were not enough rations or because of somthing else that nobody knew? The Haeftling themselves were apathic, perhaps the Kapos feared they would be replaced. It was no more mentioned, neither were there any more open executions. Death has many faces, so have little unobserved killings.

Then the horrible, much feared evacuation starts.

My clothes and shoes were stolen. All discipline is gone. The SS can not keep order. We hear the command, "Everyone capable of walking must go to the Appellplatz." I didn't bother to move, since even two kilometers is too much for me. I prefer to be shot on the spot. All those, who are able to walk are taken away, except the doctors.

That night we heard three barrages. We lie, naked, listen silently under our covers.

Next morning the group who had previously left of those still capable of walking came back and immediately assailed the kitchen. Many are missing, and new faces appeared. They raport their terrible march. The SS meanwhile quitely sneaked away, leaving behind old Wehrmacht soldiers and four SS guards of seemingly Ukrainian origin. Perhaps they had been involved in the execution. They are hardly capable of speaking any german, having a terribly strong russian accent..

The inmates broke the remaining windows of the kitchen, seeking food. Suddenly all the blocks came alive, including ours. Stolen potatoes in Haftling's caps, margarine and canned food appears out of nowhere.

The sound of gun fire comes to us from very close now, giving us new strength and hope. I get up too, go to organize. Find a pair of good shoes and footcloth, which someone had hidden under a blanket. This plucks up my spirit and I begin to regain some of my confidence. The condition of my feet is a very vulnerable point as far as I am concerned. I also "organize" a nice Haftling shirt for myself. It is lice infested like everything else. But it is still a shirt. I throw my blood stained one away. After finding trousers, I am reasonably dressed again. I am amused by the people struggling all around me. Everyone is stealing and running about. They stack the things into a big pile and cover it by blankets. Than they go out to steal again. By the time they get back, everything is gone from the original pile. I have a good laugh at this. What do they need all those raw potatoes for? They can't carry them away anyway. I steal from these hiding places. At least this makes up for the fact that it is hard for me to get around.

That night there is a fire in the stove and everyone is baking potatoes. Thrusting long wires through them and sticking them into the

fire. I exchange two, even three raw potatoes for a baked one. There is such a disorder around the stove, that it overturns from time to time and people are scorched and burned. Still they are bringing potatoes up from somewhere. The starving and weak, stagger to and fro, stealing from each other hoards of unnecessary things. They keep treading on each other, swearing, naked or half naked with torn bodies and broken souls. Jealously trying to guard their loot. They keep watching one another suspiciously, weighing out possibilities, trying to guess who is the stronger. It is no longer a matter of strength, just some feeble remnant of this is left.

People weigh thirty kilos. They already bear the stamp of death. Grinning skulls, dull eyes, which would glitter for the fragment of a second only upon the sight of some free loot. Their hip bones protruding so much, that a large sized potato could easily have been laid upon them. The fact that they have no stomach, makes the hip bone all the more prominent. Their legs, long sticks as if broken in two by a large knot forming the knee joint, from which the stick bends to and fro. On this knot the knee cap sits separately. There is a big hole between the scull and the bones of the chest at the other end of their bodies. Their necks are nothing but protruding vertebrae with enormous Adam's apples. The moving skull is thrown upon this rickety structure. Deep set, suspiciously searching eyes look out from their orbits. Constantly grinning jaws. Perfect specimens for anatomical study. They are even alive and used to have souls! Now they are all soulless animals. They are out to steal even from one another, they are hungry and want to eat... definitely!

Suddenly large farm wagons appear, the guards order the Kapos and the doctors to throw us into them. So our lives count again. They could

have killed us on the spot. We are taken to the railway tracks, but by the time we get there the train has already left. We want to return to the camp but there is the sound of shooting from that direction. Are the remaining "living" inmates being shot there? We ponder this question in silent. Why are they being shoot, while we were evacuated?

By now there are about three hundred miserable creatures lying on the embankment by the railway lines. It is night. We are guarded by a German SS soldier who doesn't trust us a bit and threatens to kill us on the spot if we try to escape. Those able to move however, seek shelter to try to keep themselves from freezing to death.

It is probably the little, surprising ability I still had to move, that kept me alive this time. I get up with great difficulty. My limbs are stiff and I am freezing in my striped "pyjamas". I raise myself on all fours, then push myself erect. I somehow start to stagger, feeling dizzy. If I remain lying where I am, frost will solve my problem. I manage to crawl to the nearest group of inmates lying on the ground. Most of them are asleep, many dying. I start to kick them with my foot, one by one. My instinct is keeping me going. The potatoes seem to have given me a little strength. Some wake up in alarm, others swear at me, while the remainder only groan. One eighteen or nineteen year old boy doesn't react at all. I check his pulse. Nothing. His eyes open, lice are already beginning to cover his dark blanket. I try to pull it off, but it does not come away easily, for he is all wrapped up in it. I have to drag it off by force. It is hard work to this, as his body is rigidly contracted. I wrap myself in his blanket. Then I go on kicking the fallen bodies, saying to them,"lebt noch?" ("still alive old chap?") Some were not. I picked out two more bodies with decent looking blankets and succeed in peeling the blankets off. So I have

three blankets now. At least, my life will be spared from the cold. I am not strong enough to carry a fourth, but using the opportunity of finding it, spread it on a couple of corpses lying side by side. This will make a fine bed. It may even save me from the moisture and cold of the ground below. I see a group of doctors sadly kicking the corpses into a pile. A group is being built of these dead fellows. I fall asleep.

It is day break by the time I wake up. My upper blanket is covered with frost. The train pulls in and the funeral field comes alive. It is the Kaufering freight train loaded with field guns and ammunition camouflaged by sheeting. Since the rails are newly laid after the last bombardment, it pass us by cautiously. It seems to pass both fast and for ever. I see smoke rising in the distance and discover that I had slept through a long and interesting bombardment.

Those who are still alive and able to move, go up to the train. Perhaps a hundred, or a hundred and fifty of us are clambering around. A similar number had frozen to death. Three Blockaelteste and some of the more decent doctors, still with us, help us aboard. Pulling us all into the train where there are already other Haftlings from a nearby Lager. It is a long and painful process. Some have to be pulled up by their arms or feet. Then the groaning dies down, everyone is stacked into the wagons. We see how cunning the Germans are, they had attached field guns and other war material at the rear end of the train and a whole SS unit is traveling with us. The guns and soldiers are covered, and the soldiers travel in passenger wagons, but most of the striped clothed Haftlings are exposed to the sky above. The train pulls away slowly. The crammed inmates groan at each jolt. There are hopelessly weak, wounded and sick among us, for whom death would have come as a

mercy. They are being evacuated, forced to run away from those who have come to free them.

We move on for about ten minutes, then the wheels creak and the train comes to a halt. We see through the window the red light of the signal and can hear an alarm from afar. Air raid! We see the SS jump off and run into the nearby forest. We ourselves can't move, though we could now have escaped easily, since the doors are open. Suddenly we hear something, that sounds like hail rattling on the roof of the train. We had often heard this in the winter, on our way to work at Moll's. But now the sky is bright and the sun shining. The knocking is strange and very loud, as if someone is hitting the roof rapidly with an ax. We soon realize what is happening. The air is shaken by the sudden loud drone of an engine and those near the door shout that they see American airplane climbing steeply. We have no time to think about this. The second run is followed by the third and fourth. In the roof a series of holes appear, one after the other in a long chain. Pieces of shrapnel and other metal splinters fall on those sitting below. The sun shining in through the holes, creates brilliant rays piercing the dusty air.

One of the walls of the wagon which had been riddled through in the preceding attack, now fall away, and vanishes with a clatter. Whoever happens to be sitting there disappear. My neighbour, who had just borrowed my cap, falls forward, blood pouring out of his mouth. The one behind him sits there without his face, whilst the one next to him is shot in the thigh. The wagon fills with sand and splinters. The choice is now Shakespearean " to be or not to be", irrelevant as this may seem. To get out somehow and get as far away from the place as possible or to stay here and await our fate. Outside is the beautiful,

green forest and blue sky, but the SS who had left the train are waiting there too. Inside are multitudes of dead, blood and dust and the threat of another attack.

I feel a slight knock on my back, perhaps a friend of mine wants to tell me something. No he lies dead behind me. I put my hand on the place and see blood on it. My blood. So I was hit too . Alas, my legs don't seem to be able to move. In a split second all my past life flashes through my mind. My mother's face, before she died when I was 3. My first day in elementary school; horse chestnut battles on the promenade; snow; parties; summering in Kranjska Gora. The Austrian Alps; Italy; my aunt's house on the Lago Maggiore; Fascists feasting after the Alcazar victory; the Austrian Alps; high school; then Agi, the folks at home; the German tanks on the main square; ghetto. No! I am not permitted to die. I have reasons to live. I want to see them again. I must inform them about the fate of the children of Block 24 Birkenau, and myself. I feel my strength returning. I climb out of the wagon, with my blankets hold around me in case I fall. I advance towards the forest as fast as I can stumble along. The sun heats me up.

I hear the same rattle again. I struggle onto the ground. With much effort I get up again. I must try to get as far away from the train as possible. Then an explosion! Everything begins to fly around. I get covered with sand.

"Run on don't look back" I say to myself, Sodoma and Gomorrha are there! "Go on and on. Down up, on my belly, up again."

There I am at last, in the forest. Now I can finally look back without being turned into stone. An enormous hole has appeared in the engine and boiling water and steam is squirting out. People are still clambering out of the train and the machine guns are still rattling.

While I am looking, several bombs come down in quick succession. The air refilled with smoke, sand and pieces of flying wood. Whistling pieces of iron pass through the air. The tree I am hiding behind has its top blown off with a loud crack.

Suddenly I hear gunfire from the edge of the forest from the other direction, I feel a dull thud in my left arm. It felt like the first time. I touched the place and my hand becomes once more blood stained. A tiny piece of a shell comes away in my hand from below my armpit.

I remember that I had learned in the scouts how I should bandage myself and I bind myself with a piece of cloth torn off from the trousers of a corpse. Then I decide to leave the place as fast as I can. The tree had been shot and I knew I had better get as far as possible, before loss of blood made me too weak to walk.

I see a group of fleeing SS, some of them are on the ground praying, but this doesn't help them very much for at that very moment there is an explosion. Just a hole remains in the ground where they were. "Very nice! Still, there is a God in the sky!" Other SS are shooting, not at the planes but at the fleeing Jews. So, we are caught in the middle.

I feel another hit, again not painful, but distinct enough. This time in my leg. I see the frightened face of the fellow fugitive who had joined me, looking straight at me. Something has caught me on the ribs as well and blood is oozing out. I cough out a pinkish foam. So, it seems, it is my lung that has been hit, this time!

The thing with my arm is not serious. The blood clotted and bleeding stopped. On my leg there is a small hole. Not much blood however and no pain. Something must to caught inside. Not a pleasant situation, but it could be worse. However, I am afraid the end will be coming soon.

My unknown comrade expected me to fall down any minute, but it actually didn't feel too bad. I am beginning to find out, that it isn't so easy to die after all. The worst place I have been hit is in my thigh, that begins to hurt now, though, I don't think the bone is broken, I can stand on it. It is high time to get away with my new friend. If we plan to get out of here at all.

We look back for the last time. One of the wagons is in flames. Poor souls, those, who hadn't been strong enough to leave the train. The wind blows in our direction carrying the wails of the burning people. The train has split in two, one half has overturned and fallen in the ditch, on the other side of the track, because we can see the wheels only pointing to the sky. One of the inmates runs with his arms spread out, blue faced with bulging eyes. His neck covered with blood, he has been shot in his throat. Better not look back again! He had waited for his liberators so eagerly and now he must die may be from their very bullets.

The planes have gone and we can move relatively safely at last. Covered with many wounds, sore footed, spitting blood, but free! We step gingerly over uprooted trees, finally reaching the heart of the little forest.

After crossing the forest, we arrive at a large field. Beyond the field there is the green onion shaped tower of a church. Landsberg is the destination of most of the escaping Haftlings.

We decide not to head in that direction however. Sensing a better chance of being welcomed elsewhere, where there may be fewer refugees.

Rain begins to fall slowly. It gently washes away the blood. My "pyjamas" stick to my open wounds. I feel that my arms are absolutely powerless, especially the wounded one. I am now close to lying down and

giving up.

I had saved my three blankets, as I climbed out of the train. They were a useful covering when the sand and dust begun to fall. Now they become soaked through with rainwater and so heavy, that I have to throw away all my other possessions in order to carry even one of them. I would need them badly at night.

The way seems endless. Pain shoots through me at every step. My friend wails constantly. He is also badly wounded. There stands a large tree in the middle of the field. We decide to make an effort to reach it and have a break. But once there we can't afford to sit down as we would never have been able to get up again. So we lean against the tree and for a moment enjoy our well deserved rest in a relatively dry place. Then we stumble on.

Fortunately the ground is unploughed, fairly smooth here. We walk round every little hole and finally reach the outskirts of a nearby village. A dog even honours us by barking on our arrival. We have a good laugh at this until we realize he is barking at a raven instead. This make us feel dejected, we had hoped to have some resemblance of human beings. We reach the first houses and the few people, women and children step back as we approach. We must be a terrifying sight, because a small boy runs into a house, screaming that the devils have come out during the night. Indeed, as we looked at each other even we are a little alarmed, although we are used to seeing living skeletons.

We approach one of the houses to ask for the nearest doctor. The woman we find there is frightened at first, but then she treats us kindly. She gives us something to drink, allows us to wash our hand and face, in front of the door and goes to prepare some food for us. We gulp down the buttermilk she gives us, devour a large slice of bread

and some baked potatoes. We are feeling much better. She is just about to lead us to the stable, after persuading her that the Americans are coming and we could save her by testifying that she had given us shelter, when a soldier appears at the corner of the street. He sets his eyes on us. Nothing could be done. We are prisoners again !

Beaten once more. We think our suffering will never come to an end. When the SS sees our wounds he becomes a little more human. He leads us round the corner and pushes us into a hut set in a field. Where there are already several poor devils, in similar shape. No one complains. We will show the SS that we are at least as brave as they are supposed to be.

We stay locked up for several hours, until a two wheeled cart comes pushed by Haeftlings from the nearest camp. We are loaded onto it, like being handled by the Totenkommando. I am lucky to have no one sitting on top of me. It is raining again and I am happy to have kept my last blanket.

After half an hour on a bumpy path we reach camp number 1. There Arschloch is now in command. This fellow had the initiative to organize a special search unit in the direction of the bombing site, to collect the fugitives. The short man keeps jumping about, issuing orders. He is kept very busy, since all the bombed out inmates that have been found in the surrounding area are brought back to his camp. The majority of them succeeded in escaping at the air attack, but many are left. These are mainly Haeftlings in bad shape. Who have no energy left in order to run away far enough or hide.

After being received as newcomers, I manage to exchange a deloused blanket for my old one. They honour me by cutting my hair. Apparently we are worth something to them once more. The Americans must be very

near and perhaps they will exchange us? Are we hostages? I am assigned to one of the rear barracks along with my new companion. There are many who are in a more serious condition than we are. For us there is no chance of medical care. Not even having our wounds bandaged. For most of the doctors managed to escape. They were physically in a better condition and therefore stronger than any of us. At least the wounds have stopped bleeding.

We stay where we are until evening and then the commander calls for an Appell and evacuation begins. The sick and the wounded are carried to the nearby station. Bread is distributed, one loaf for every three people and they are loaded into the wagons. Our old acquaintance, lieutenant Temple is also there. His own camp has been deserted. (Is the meaning of a "Tempel" in German not a Jewish Synagogue?!) Much to our surprise, there is a separate group of healthy, pregnant women among us. They have been told to enter the wagons, and when they hesitate Tempel goes to them tells them that they should keep quite cooperative since the order has arrived to send them over -the Swiss border!

The evacuation continues all night proceeding very slowly. More and more trucks are pouring in. Carrying the unfortunate inmates away from freedom and probably to their deaths. The road is lit up by projectors, and each block is searched to make sure no one stays behind. Then the blocks are sealed off.

My friend and I go over to the torn fence of the neighboring women's camp and ask them if they can find us some clothes. I obtain a beautiful warm, dry, checked woollen skirt. This is the first time I wear such a thing. It feels warm and cozy. They let us sleep for a few hours in their bar rack, where the roof is not leaking. They look after

us as if we are their brothers. They even wash our wounds and bandage them. As the evacuation moves to the woman's camp, we sneak back to our own.

Nearly the whole camp is empty by now. We pull throusers over our skirts and become men again. After this splendid metamorphosis, very good pea soup is served for lunch. We have never eaten such soup in the camp before. It is thick and fat. The spoon can stand upright in it and so it is given the score of "quality" soup according to camp definition. We are given a very large portion. There is even enough for a second helping for everyone. Our trouble is, however, that we have only ten utensils for fifty people and some wanting to enjoy the pleasure, eat it much too slowly.

The excellent soup has serious consequences. It is too fat for us and all are rewarded with diarrhea. Some people can't contain themselves and even have to squat down on the way. Others pull down their pants while on the march in order not to waste time once they reach the toilets. The kitchen latrine is out of bounds for inmates, so they have to go to the large communal one instead. It is quite amusing to see them running holding up their pants or with their pants flapping round their ankles. Once there they join the fight, since of course, there is not enough room for everyone. People go to the walls of the barrack to attend to their needs. The Kapo chases them with his stick and his path is marked by wailing. When he arrives at his victim he usually bursts out laughing and goes back to where he came from.

We are made to line up again. Evacuation has to proceed. The farm wagons and lorries come to carry the remaining people to the train. Now the evacuation is stepped up. They are in a hurry! Those incapable of walking were separated from the others but there are now no more left

than twenty or thirty in this category. Everyone senses that their "final solution" had come. I plan to take advantage of this very situation. Loss of blood has made me appreciably weaker. I can't turn on my wounded side and every movement is extremely painful. I pretend to be completely unable to move. The commander had those incapable of even being transported, lie in a separate place. I lie down among them when no one is watching. When almost none are left in the camp, the camp gates are locked.

It has been raining for some time. Now, to see who is still alive, they start kicking those lying in the puddles. I pretend to be dead. The first three in our category have been thrown in a corner and the SS shoots them, using them as target practice. "Was sicher ist sicher" ("Better to be sure than sorry"). I hear three shots, so they have finished with the first group. Then it is the turn of another three. Now it is time for me to act. As they carry the next bunch away, I take advantage of them being busy and slip away into the nearby kitchen latrine. I listen to find out if someone had noticed me, but everything is proceeding as before.

After they are finished, they notice some are missing and a search is begun. Fortunately they don't think of the latrines, until the very end. By this time I have climbed into one of the holes, among the excrement. I hear the SS come in and swear aloud, but he never think of looking for a half dead inmate in the dark hole. Luckily, the place had been cleaned and sealed before, only to be broken open a short while ago, by the inmates because of their attacks of diarrhea. The hole is not deep, I stand on my feet and feel a step. After climbing on this, I am able to sit in the dirt whilst I contemplate my future.

Suddenly it began to get hot. The barrack had been set alight above

my head. The smell was unbearable, the smoke suffocating, burning beams were falling, but I was safe below the concrete plate, until a beam fell and broke the thin concrete and slid down. The beam slipped into the excrement and as the fire was quenched, raised steam, creating a terrible stench. I realized that I will get poisoned from the fumes, if I don't get out of here. I managed to reach the collapsed concrete slab that had fallen inside after making an endless effort. But there seems to be someone who is helping me, too. I can recognize only his contour. With his help I succeed in climbing out, and he leaves me there. Once I recover, he is nowhere to be seen.

I know the Germans would shoot me on sight, if they see me. So I creep out slowly on all fours. I have to climb out through the hole on the other side of the barrack, and indeed see an SS outside gazing in the directio. Watching for any signs of life inside. They are still wondering where the missing are and keeping a sharp eye on the door. It seems to be important that no witnesses remain alive. It is extremely painful to crawl around, as the floor is covered with splinters. At last I manage to get out. I move a few meters and faint.

I wake up to a hard kick on my wounded leg. The German who has stumbled on me swears aloud, taking me for a corpse. He goes on cursing. My thigh hurts me terribly and I can't move my leg. When he has disappeared round the corner of the barrack one of the "corpses" moves on the ground and waves to me. I don't know where this companion has come from, but I would certainly have perished in the fire or been shot by an SS, if this "dead one" hadn't come to my aid.

This unknown comrade helps me and takes me to a building converted to a hospital. I am not able to stand. My thigh is hanging like a rag, my leg is certainly broken.

The hospital is not only intact but even newly equipped with clean deloused beds. It is already dark by this time. My unknown saviour lays me down near the water tap and proceeds to cut off my dirty clothes still covered with excrement and no doubt stinking "to high heaven". After washing me down he lays me under one of the beds wrapped in a blanket. Then he disappears without saying a word.

I soon find out that I am not alone. There are others under the beds on all sides of me, all brought here by the stranger. He returns bringing someone else. Then he fits the nails in their places in the door from the outside, climbs in himself through and closes the window, and lays down.

He warns us not to make a noise since the barrack has been searched and sealed off by the Germans. No one is expected to look for us here. He orders us to remain under the beds, because the Germans search with electric torches. It has been made perfectly clear that no witness must remain alive in the camp.

I fall asleep under the splendid bed, on the concrete floor. I woke up, to the whistle of grenades. The rattle of a machine gun comes from close by. The food store has been set on fire by the Germans and a blazing light glares outside. We are again caught in between cross fire. I feel a sort of excitement, an anticipation, yet this does not cheer me up very much. The grenades are flying higher and higher and fall farther and farther away. Who is chasing whom? We can hear voices whispering very near but it is impossible to understand a word they are saying. We must not move. In less than a minute tip toeing armed men appear. They vanish like ghosts without us being able to identify them!

Suddenly a huge tank rattles by on the other side of the barbed wire. We can clearly see its marking. A star! It must be Americans! We are

free! It is the 27th April, 1945.

At first we can't believe it. Then an alien looking steel helmeted soldier jumps into the barrack aiming with his rifle through the broken up door. His entire appearance is strange. He is tall and black! He flashes his light into my face. He searches under the beds with his light, illuminating our skeletal bodies. Tearful white eyes shine out from his black face. He speaks an english sounding strange language, calling another soldier, saying something to him in his English. The other throws a piece of chocolate to each of us. Some are able to climb on the beds. I need help, my shot left leg is now broken.

We all break out crying, in a soft, embarrassing and helpless way. Those among us who still have sufficient energy, try to kiss the liberators, but they hesitate and attempt to prevent us from touching them. Yet the now exhaeftlings in their overwhelming enthusiasm hug their necks, hips, boots and overpower them. They can hardly break loose of the lice infested human wrecks. The skeletons. Others like me, are simply apathic. I lie on the bed, looking, and feel nothing, as part of the scenery.

The liberaters decide between them that one of them will remain. The other speaks in a field telephone apparatus attachedto his back like a roucksack and then leaves. Both have a red cross on their helmet. The remaining one, the black one lifts those unable to move by themselves onto the beds, and covers them with blankets. Before covering me he ties a piece of wood on each side of my broken leg to act as a splint and writes something at the head of my bed, sticking a paper on my forehead. He distributes the rest of his chocolate among us from his side bag. When this is done, he notes the number of the barrack, draws something on the wall and then leaves.

We can't really grasp what has happened. We don't dare to believe that our suffering is over. That we are free. It all happened so quickly. So simply. We won't be beaten any more? No longer confined behind wires? We can't apprehend that we won't remain "musselman", that we will now have enough to eat and may be, even enjoy the life again for which we had suffered so much.

After the first two American soldiers had departed we didn't see anyone for a long time. We are too weak to get out of bed ourselves. A whole day passes by, followed by an other. The chocolate is finished. Then only the second afternoon, the American army and Red Cross arrives. They are accompanied by many inmates from other camps they had collected on the way.

They brought back some of the SS guards too, but this time as prisoners. Our angry Haeftlings have little pity on them. They have tied them up and throw them into the still fuming embers of the bread store, which they themselves had set alight two days earlier. At the time they were romping and raving through the camp, killing the inmates. Vengeance seem to be dealing with them more quickly then they deserve.

Other American come to the camp. High officers arrive and film reporters turn us into "film stars". They give away cigarettes and sweets. I have no use for these items. Smoking would have meant certain death. We would have been happier if they have been concerned with feeding us.

On the 28th April, the first supply unit arrives. The kitchen is put into action. The pots are set into place and the floor mopped up. Whole car loads of rice, eggs, butter, white bread, chocolate and whatever our hearts desire, arrives. It all goes into the kitchen and meanwhile

we are getting more and more hungry at the sight of all this food. Have they forgotten us?

At last, in the evening, the order is sent out, "every group fetch food from the kitchen". We chose a representative "gentleman" from Budapest, who is still able to walk and sent him to the kitchen to fetch our portions. He came back with a stranger and brought us our share pushed on a wheel barrow. Perhaps the same one used by the Totenkommando? Alas, by the time he gets back it is already so dark, that it becomes quite a problem dealing out the food. For there is no electricity. An excited dispute arises.

We are given half a loaf of white bread, butter, one egg and hot sweet black coffee. Weeping, I examine this on my bed. I also discover corn flakes, I have never seen such a thing before. It is sweet and is served on a real, white porcelain plate. There are enough genuine real spoons for everyone. The big pot of corn flakes stands there, in the middle, with enough for all of us to take more.

I am so tired from this excitement that although, I drink as much as I can, I can only eat the egg and some bread. The rest of the food which was brought to me, since I am still bed ridden, I hid under my bed. Covering it with a second plate and rags. Who knows, perhaps it will be worth while to take this precaution. Then with the thought of the heavenly food in my head I remember my beloved ones and I fall asleep with this thought.

In the morning I have a strange feeling. Today nobody shouts. There are no beatings, but I do not seem to be happy about my salvation. It does not seem to be what I had always dreamed about. It takes me hours until I understand what is happening and I this does not please me any more either. I feel tired, apathetic, and I want to cry. What will

await me now? Have I a home at all? Have I relatives left? How many of them remain?

I feel hungry. I make up for what I had missed for so long. I don't exactly eat, rather while weeping I stuff myself, with bread and from under the blanket. Then I drink the cold, sweet coffee which I had saved in a cup on the floor, by using my own free will. As a free man for the first time since the June of 1944.

LIBERATED.

"Wir dan-ken un-sern Fueh- rer! Wir dan-ken un-sern Fueh-rer!" ("We are thank-ful to our Lea-der! We are thank-ful to our Lea-der!") This phrase kept coming into my mind. This is how the Germans had greeted each of the long line of victories as they accompanied their "Leader" throughout his war. Trampling nation after nation underfoot. "Wir danken unsern Fuehrer."

The SS themselves had to clean the toilets now at american gun point and were made to toil for their daily bread. They could not beat us any more. Herr Noah, the violent superintendent, the beast from Molls now wept aloud, for fear of being beaten. The rascal was down on his knees and weeping, forgetting how proud he had been in his German uniform. Now he proved unworthy of that miserable symbol. He was taught a hard lesson to be sure!

We were visited by the Red Cross and the Mother Superior of the nearby sisterhood, the Magnusheim Holzhausen Lazarett. She told us that we, the blessed ones would be transferred to the Hospital. We were put on to stretchers, carried into ambulances equipped with superb springs and removed from the camp. On the way I saw other groups of desperate SS. They wrung their hands stricken with terror. Who knows what was bothering them. I was amazed. Such behaviour on their part was unusual.

I had never cried with fear, even though I was only sixteen years old. Well they could thank their Fueh-rer for being so lucky. The ambulance sped away on the smooth concrete road, the seemingly endless road of suffering. Every small stone I had come to know so well. These stones were our markers of the distance as we had struggled during those foggy nights of sleepily marching. Here one of the Kohn brothers fell down in exhaustion, there the ever eating SS's dog was overrun. How smooth and fast it all passed now! A short distance of no importance in the springy ambulance.

Magnusheim Holzhausen is a big baroque convent with many corridors and windows and a well kept garden. There were all sorts of Haeftlings, arriving from different camps, all in the same final, Musselmannish condition. The ambulances stood in the line, the place looked like an emergency ward. One by one the German prisoner attendants brought the strechers, through the vaulted entrance and corridor. Under strong supervision of the Mother Superior, who seemed to keep an eye on everything. By midnight, it was my turn. We were weighed and examined after having been given a hot, heavenly bath. Alone, in a big bathtub! The bath attendant, a young Wermacht prisoner, who lifted me as if I was an empty cardboard box, attended to my broken leg, amazed that I had survived with such wounds untreated for several days. I would have been amazed myself, had I not known the reason. One can bear seemingly anything in this world and I had wanted to go on living just to show them! My weight was found 24 Kgs. The attendant wrote it in the big admission register and in my sick file. The clothes, that had stuck to my wounds were peeled off. So were my improvised bandages. When I was shaven and steamed by the hot water I burst out crying. I remembered Them. What were They doing? Were They

alive and They, too, having such a bath?

I was disinfected with a white powder, my wounds were temporarily bandaged and I was given a clean night shirt. There was no need for a stretcher, to take me to the second, third floor, or to the emergency room. Mr. Wehrmacht picked up the empty cupboard box, jumping three steps at a time. I was examined, after being weighed anew. I was found the same 24 Kg. The doctor pushed some kind of steel needles into every wound in my body. Poured some sort of liquid inside and bandaged them thoroughly. After this he fixed my broken leg with a splint. Until now I was not aware that my leg was broken, yet in the splint it hurt terribly.

The day for the operation was set for the next day. I was taken to the upper floor and laid in a soft, big, white warm bed, in which I almost got lost. I think that every one there was crying. Whoever has been lying on wooden planks for even a short time, can appreciate the indescribable feeling of lying in a proper bed again. I simply couldn't believe it. I kept on wondering if I was dreaming. Or may be I was already dead and this was heaven! Perhaps I had simply become mad after all. I pinched myself several times as I once read heroes of fairy tales do in story books. I could feel myself, so this was real.

I began to try to understand why I had suffered and what had kept me alive. I thought of Them again and of my promise to Them. The thought left me anxious. What, if They were no more? If I didn't find Agi alive, if "the Arrow Cross" scoundrels had caught my Father, my step mother and others? My brother had been only two and half years old, when I last saw him. Had their privilege been of any use to them there? And my sister? She was tough and had her fiancee waiting for her back home. What about Agi and her mother? They were probably all alive. But

I couldn't rid myself of my unpleasant thoughts and gnawing anxiety. Then I thought of Ivan, who I had last seen in the train during the evacuation. He was too weak to walk but I hadn't able to be of any use to him either. Jancsi Korda had been seen on the same occasion, bleeding, crouching on the floor. They were probably killed there and then. Pali Weisz was stronger, he could even run. He jumped on the other side of the train. Not being able to have them here in bed with me now, my heart ached for them all. I fell asleep brooding all these things over in my mind.

In the morning I was awakened by a nurse who propped up my head with a pillow. She held the spout of a cup to my lips to give me something to drink. Only now was I beginning to feel how weak I was. I am carried down to the operating theatre and given an anaesthetic in a face mask, like a dog's. I manage to count up to ten and then I fell into a deep abyss. I woke up in the recovery ward. My leg in a plaster cast. The nurse told me that my arm was all right, they have cleaned up the wound and there will be nothing left except for a little scar. They have also removed a small piece of schrapnel from one of my rib. My lung itself was undamaged. The pressure alone caused the pink colour in my spittle. They had thrown away this piece of metal.

My leg, which had been operated on was fixed, by means of a plate and screws. The German doctor wanted to amputate, but the American surgeon persuaded not to worry about the infection. I was fortunate in being one of the first to receive the new wonder medicine called Penicillin, acquired through the medical unit of the American forces. It was said to protect against infection and with it, it maymight enable my leg to be saved. Both the American and German surgeons operated on me together and I became a very popular patient, with my saved leg. It was a pity,

that I could not enjoy their frequent visits, since I was nearly always asleep as a result of the large dose of opium I received to combat my prosaic acute diarrhoea. I only seemed to be awake when they roused me in order to eat. I was told, if all goes well, in a few more days the plaster cast will be replaced with one that will allow me to stand on my leg. It doesn't hurt me any more, but until then I am prevented from joining the others and enjoying my freedom.

Every day I get smeared with a liquid, called benzyl benzoate, from head to foot. This is to cure those horrible little beasts that crawl under my skin called Sarcoptes Scabiei. My hands, feet and groin are covered with wounds through scratching. Yet scratching alone does not get rid of the little parasites which bore themselves under my skin. It is impossible to get rid of them by scratching. Only the penetrating liquid reachs and kills the little "bastards". They are like us, the Jews! What am I thinking about now? Nonsense! German culture has indeed infected me!

After three days of treatment I am supposed to be rid of them, but they seem to be getting the better of me. The orderly lifts me every day, carrying me rather warily to the dressing room. There he gives me the bottle, to smear myself with the liquid and wrapped in a clean sheet, he returns me to my bed. Those on the ward are disgusted with me and call me "Schmierfink" ("slimy animal"). The orderly touches me only with rubber gloves. He swears at Hitler for having cheated the German people by assuring them about the wonder weapon and sending them teenagers in uniform instead. He had great faith in Hitler. This Hitler who ruined Germany, landed him up with the ugly "Schmierfink".

Lying in my dream bed I heared the radio speaking about a terrible weapon, a sort of bomb which the Americans dropped on Japanese town.

One bomb seems to be enough to destroy a big city. It was called an atomic bomb. The Germans spread the rumour that this was Hitlers secret weapon which the American stole. That Hitler did not betray the Germans, only they hadn't hd time to complete their weapon. May be! Now it is important, that I survived and Hitler is dead. The Germans believe that he is only in hiding and will come back and win. The Americans could have used their bomb earlier and save millions of lives. Were they interrested in that?

Some time later, the plaster cast is taken off and after some physical therapy I am able to limp around. Now I am happy for having been given this tremendous present: my own life! A few weeks ago I was sentenced to die, now I have the privilege of living.

The food consists mostly of rice pudding, vegetables and dried meat. This is just about tolerable for our condition. I hear that many of my companions have died from diarrhoea after eating everything that happened to be at hand at the time. They were not cautious enough, opened tins and ate as much as they could. They were sometimes struck so quickly by this dearrhoea that they did not even have time to finish the contents of the tin, before they died. It some times killed them on the spot. Liberation had not helped them much. This time it seems I had really been fortunate, since my broken leg had prevented me from organizing the richer food for myself during the first days of freedom. I had no choice other than getting used to improved food in a gradual way.

After recovering sufficiently to be able to get about, I found myself among a group of veteran concentration camp inmates traveling in a bus to Schondorf, on the Ammersee. There a big house in the woods, had been installed as a rest house for Haftlings.

Four of us slept in a room together. From my window on the second floor, I saw beautiful trees in a thickly wooded area. The dining room was situated on the first floor, in the center of the big house. The food served to us was wonderful. But we were still afraid of the experience of the victims of rich food, so we hardly dared to eat it. However the trees outside are green, it is spring and the less severely ill are able to lie around on mattresses in the garden. Step by step we regain our ability to stomach food and are able to take more of it all the time.

When we were weighed, I find I have gained 13 kg. In the bath at Holzhausen I was only 24 and now I am already 37 kg. How could I have put on so much weight in such a short time? It seems everyone gains half a kilo a day on the average. We have to laugh, looking at each other. Two extremely thin spindly legs and arms supporting enormous pouches. Every bone sticking out from the appendages and a big knot for an elbow. The skull still fit for an anatomical lesson, seems balanced on a narrow neck. We walk so awkwardly that this in itself is extremely comical. Using sticks or crutches, to balance ourselves and our pot bellies. We fall and get up again waddling around wherever our legs carry us and this was not always where we intended.

After a while I had become visibly stronger. I can again walk normally and my wounds have healed. My blood is being purified. Unfortunately the latter process is accompanied by bursting boils, sometimes tens of them at a time all over my body. The one that is healing seems to give way to an other that is forming. This malady lasts for weeks. Yet it does not hinder us from trying to return to human society.

We ask one of the volunteer attendants, whose sole task is to fulfil

our requests, for a harmonica. From now on, we sing till the late hours of the evenings, sitting in the well kept garden, or round the big table in the main hall. We tell each other of our experiences. Trying to pick up information about relatives, friends, or just someone from our home environment. We make music and sing by moonlight.

We obtain some books from a teacher. These include a Latin anthology and along with a few boys and girls we start refreshing the material of our long gone school days. We come to the sorrowful conclusion that we have forgotten nearly everything. We can hardly add or subtract. So every day we sit around together, beside the lake diligently studying in our process of becoming human beings again. Finally we can even accomplish logarithms. A German priest, an excellent teacher, performed "miracles" with us. We feel ourselves regaining the once familiar material at an incredible speed.

As we begin to walk like human beings, our stomachs flatten, our abscesses heal and we are able enjoy life again. We play games of running and under medical supervision spend hours in physical exercise.

The old experience of a tearing pain in my left upper chest returns. It keeps coming back and won't cease. The doctor says it is pleurisy and it will never be completely cured. I must be careful not to catch cold. This might prove fatal. Perhaps it is Tuberculosis, this must be diagnosed "at home".

I go for walks beside the lake. The Ammersee is a large, beautiful, clear blue stretch of water. Boathouses stained in different colours hug the shore, perched on poles sticking out of the water. Boats and motor launches swing lazily at their moorings, beside the clean, golden brown sandy shore. Round tables covered with clipped on vividly coloured table clothes are shaded by large stripped sunshades. The

lake is lined with large chestnut trees, covered with a spreading foliage of dark green leaves, heavily laden with bursting chestnuts. Behind a white gravel promenade, one can see beautiful gardens and villas. The villages scattered on the slopes of the mountains are reflected upside down in the water on the other side.

We hear a loud drone, the smooth mirror surface of the lake becomes ruffled and waves break on the shore. On the lake in the distance we see a little launch with its chimney smoking and the happy go lucky people waving at us. A few minutes pass and a collection of tiny, glittering sailboats cross the lake, while the launch has disappeared. The colours are so sharply defined, the picture so vivid and the air so clear that it all seems a dream. The German gossip there are secret treasures in sealed cases on the bottom of the lake. This makes the athmosphere something peculiar, even somewhat mistic.

We climb into a motor boat and speed away to the depth of the lake. I can't believe all this is true. Is it I who have stayed alive to see all this! Am I really alive and free!

The next day we go on a trip to see some of the many sights in the neighborhood. We visit a very small chapel. It must be very old. All nooks and crannies, in semi darkness. We are shown the catacomb. The side is covered with moss and the wall is crumbling. There is a fresco which must have been beautiful but is now deeply furrowed. We climb up to the belfry. On the opposite shore white winding roads lend beauty to the landscape. Below, at the waterside, American soldiers are playing, dressed in bathing trunks, boating and laughing. They are in a gay mood, chewing their gum, their gait is self assured, relaxed, impressive.

The first thing that strikes me about the Americans is their food.

They keep whole animals on ice: veal, pork, plucked and clean poultry. They can fruit: pineapples, bananas, melon and whatever one desires, keeping them in perfect condition. I especially admire the tomatoes which look absolutely fresh, yet they have doubtless been picked long before. They have very strange pancakes. They open a tin containing some yellow, syrupy liquid. Pour this onto a hot plate, then it puffs up and turns into a kind of sponge cake. Nothing is needed but water to melt it. The mixture contains honey, fat and all the required ingredients. They eat these pancakes with marmalade or melon jam. If the supervisor comes and happens to be thirsty, they will cut up forty oranges and squeeze them. The left overs are distributed among the onlooking youngsters.

The American camp is constantly surrounded by German urchins hoping to be given something. The soldiers have a crate of oranges in the soldiers mess. They stand by the window, throwing them out one by one, enjoying the fight that breaks out among the children below.

I had a contest with an American to see who could eat the most. He won by consuming twenty eight legs of chicken and three plates of pineapple. The next day he was bent over with stomach ache.

The soldiers would have as much as ten courses at dinner eating only a little of each course. Their shirts were always meticulously ironed and spotlessly clean. They looked immaculate in public. Their small car, the jeep, was always at their disposal. They would climb into the car, start the engine and rush away. Sometimes a group of eight or more would cram themselves into the small four person vehicle. They hung onto the fenders, steering wheel and any other way the car could carry them. Always cheerful and laughing, whistling and chewing their gum. There seemed to be no discrimination between officers and men, apart

from insignia notifying the difference in rank. They ate the same food at the same table and stood in line together.

Entertainment has many forms. The Coloured among the occupying forces prefer some form of throw and catch game. They wear an enormous glove on one hand, about three times the size of their hand. They use their free hand to throw, with great skill a ball stuffed with hair, the size of those used in tennis, into the uplifted gloved hand of their partner. Although standing quite a distance apart, the ball generally finds the target. If it doesn't, the opposite player dives for it and catch it in his glove to pass it back with his free hand. Their eyes are gleaming white under bushy eyebrows and if they see a pretty woman, their white teeth gleam out from between thick red lips. Black bodies, white ball, tropical uniforms under the chestnut trees, it is all very picturesque.

Now that we are able to move around reading is a rarer pastime. There are no Hungarian books and to read the Gothic script is slow going. I find a beautifully bound book on a rubbish heap and pick it up. Shakespeare's Coriolanus. I begin to read it but have to guess the end, since the last pages have rotted away. I pass it on to someone else, because strangely enough we can find no other reading matter in the whole neighborhood. Later I find Dante's Divine Comedy in Hungarian, translated by Babits. I bought this for the price of two cigarettes. I have to sell it afterwards because of its heavy weight. Frankly, I am prepared read any cheap novel which captured my fancy.

One of the boys bought a motor bike, which cost him no more than six cigarettes, since there was no petrol available after the Germans had squandered it in any case. He managed to scrounge a small amount of petrol from the Americans instead.

What does a newly freed person do, when he wants to have fun? He gets himself some friends, especially a lady friend. There were hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war, all sorts among were them. Many came from decent families with cultural upbringing.

I made the acquaintance of two boys who decided to join up with me. We moved together from camp to camp searching for our relatives. We could not bear to be alone. One night Miki, one of the group shyly brought along a girl dressed in camp clothes, striped trousers, oversized SS boots and an enormous coat. We couldn't help laughing. Miki must have thought he was guarding a very big secret. He took her by the arm and went away hurt, not turning round in spite of our shouts. Later he returned and we nearly fell over with surprise. Zsuzsi was wearing a simple clean dress and looked very attractive. She was pretty and spoke Hungarian. But oh for those large boots she still had! As for myself, I am lucky also. A new transport comes and with it many girls and two Italian sisters attract my attention. They look very spick and span. They also speak Yiddish, which they learned in the camps, like myself, but with an italian accent. We have no trouble in communicating.

Generally the boys rose by nine, by which time the girls had breakfast prepared. Should one of us refuse to get up by that time, one of the girls would rouse him with a bucket of water. Usually there was no shortage of this. When we ran out of soap, to clean ourselves, we used fine sand instead.

After breakfast the "supply unit" goes out to the field. Going to the field, means picking potatoes from the land abandoned by the Germans who had fled. If we happened to come across a sturdy chicken on the way, we were not aversed to cutting it's throat. Later we became too

lazy to run after them and used sickles and cut their feet, to prevent them from running away. We had lunch at noon, at tables in the camp, or on spread out blankets if we were elsewhere. We had become so fussy about our food that only our own cooking would do to satisfy us. Rarely did we eat the food supplied by the camp.

We continue to search each and every camp for relatives and acquaintances. Covering a large area, we hitch our way in the back of open wagons. Our feet dangling over the side, enjoying the wonderful German scenery. How was it be possible that in such a beautiful country such a murderous nation had been born? Among the mountains, covered by an overgrowth of dense verdant forest, we saw many knights' castles. The birthplace of romantic thinking. We remembered the fairy tales, of "Hansel und Gretchen", who overcoming the evil witch, burned her in the oven prepared for them selves. So we, the Jews were the German's evil? That not only of the Germans, but of all other nations as well! What had we done to the Hungarians? One of the high commanders had written in his order of the day, "every Jew, marching to the Russian border carries his own death sentence in his rucksack." It was an allegory to Napoleon's statement that every French soldier has the sceptre of a general in his knapsack. Why had this general written that Jews were not human, but pestilent animals with no right to live. Why? Perhaps so that the Hungarian private would not show mercy by pitying them!

So many flowers everywhere in all the windows, and yet those people were so cruel! How could this be possible?

We scout the many camps of freed Haftlings. Among the various lists there were only twenty four survivors who were registered as belonging to the Pecs district. I didn't know any of them! The only hope that remained was that my relatives had already gone "home".

The girls found their brother registtered laying in a field hospital. They were very happy, but had to leave us to stay with him and nurse him back to health. We, the remaining four, continue to search for our families.

Miki becomes almost crazy with anxiety and doubt. We all feel near desperation, feeling the strain of seeming to be so helpless in our effort. In every German train stations we see happy people embracing. Home coming German soldiers carrying heavy luggage and people running impulsively, hopefully in anticipation of their various goals. While we sit with blank faces staring at the unpunished murderers of our nation. Many many SS in their well known uniforms stripped of rank, the signs of which were still seen by the change of color that left as tell tale markings on the shabby uniforms.

Bad news come from Hungary. We didn't want to go into that unknown with thoughtless hast, but Miki couldn't bear it any longer and decided to try and smuggle himself there. Back to his little village in the lowlands. Zsuzsi decided to accompany him, claiming that she was going in that direction in any case. We all knew, there was more to it than that, but abstained from questioning them. There is no shame in love is there? Zsuzsi was a very pretty girl and Miki was not bad looking either. He would carry the conversation every evening and was very well educated. I was very sorry to see them go. We gave them a farewell party. We lit a camp fire and sat round the fire eating Portuguese sardines, pudding and pineapple. It hurt to part with these fine and cheerful friends.

Now only three of us remained of the original group. We return by train and get our selves registered in Landsberg again. From there, we will figure out our situation, and what to do next.

I catch a cold and my pleurisy returns again. I check into the military hospital, located in an enormous artillery camp, in which each building is named after a German town. The three storey blocks have parqueted floors and the numbered rooms are fully equipped with luxury devices and checkered blue and white linen. I do not lack company. Jeno Rosen from Kolozsvar is my room mate and new friend. The Dringlers from Kaposvar came to visit him. They turn out to be very fine people, who after being liberated in different places had somehow managed to find one another. After her experience, their sixteen year old daughter kept firmly at her mother's side.

We are introduced and when I mention my name is Andras, they tell me approvingly that they have a son of eighteen years, with a similar name. Sadly he is still missing. They decide after a short conversation, that "Bandi", nickname for their Andras, resembles me very much and promise to come again. I enjoyed talking to them and soon Jeno and I came to the conclusion that the Dringleers are the best people even born. We are nothing to them and yet they bring us American food nearly every day! They provide for us so abundantly that we have no need of touching the hospital meals at all. They continue to treat me as if I am their Bandi, of those whereabouts they still know nothing. We feel that this uncertainty is very painful for them. I am uneasy that I am unable to repay their extraordinary kindness in any way, but I am not allowed to leave the camp.

The fluid from my lung is slowly absorbed. I receive quartz irradiations. On principle I stop taking medicine except for vitamins. On June 17th I go to a concert, disregarding the doctor's orders. I climb out through a window on the ground floor, since the guard at the gate wouldn't let us out. This is the first time, I do this sort of

thing as a free citizen. Now I remembered the times I had climbed through the narrow drain pipe of the kitchen for potato peels! Had someone told me then that one day I would be able enjoy a tenth of the present camp food, I would not have believed him then. This time I go to a concert as a free citizen, for the first time. The first concert since liberation, is performed by the local Jewish organization. A classic concert, played by camp survivors.

The big hall is packed and people are fighting outside for places to get in. The opera singer is recalled four times for an encore after the finale. The orchestra is not allowed to leave the stage until they promise to give an evening of modern ball dance music the following night. The audience raves, everybody embraces the artists and we all have a marvelous time. From that day on, I go every evening to the American Headquarters Pavillion, where the camp artists play for amusement on the only piano of the camp. Maria Turan plays superbly and we enjoy listening to her every evening. She becomes so absorbed in her playing that she doesn't leave the tripod piano stool before she has giving several hours of classical music. This is worth more than any tranquilizer, more than any Gothic lettered literature, or even the wonderful landscape. It means a piece of home abroad, a gone, irrevocable past world in the present. Remembrance and solace. I saw many gleaming eyes whilst my friends and the girls sit there cuddles up close together and it feels good to watch them.

All I have left besides the music is a brooding mood which burst out through occasional arguments. I feel that life, as I had known it, going to concerts with Agi at home, engaging in scouts activities with my many good friends of whom hardly one remains alive, going to parties in the snowfall, this sort of life is gone. The knowledge that that

manner of life would never return, made me very depressed. I kept a moody silence. I would no longer have my old beloved friends and perhaps not even have a home. All this simply exists no more. Only the notes of music remain the same, as a beautiful remembrance for ever. All nations, except the Jews would celebrate the end of the war! As for me, this was a penalty. I feel sentenced to live again. Sentenced to live a life without the roots of my childhood, a youth of lonely long wandering, on a path without trees and flowers bordering my way. Had Hitler after all succeeded in breaking the heart of my people?

Yet now I feel that I belong to a nation. During the Holy Inquisition they had shown the Jew the cross and given them a choice. They prefered torture and death, rather than bow to the rule of that cross. They refused to deny their faith in God, the Invisible one, who, whether they like it or not lives in everyone's soul. Now the Nazi scientist had sought out our chromosomes. Which we could not change by means of choice, free will, or by yielding to pressure. They investigate the religion of our grand parents. They persecute our blood and heritage. Fanatically and madly. Usually not knowing why! Simply like that! The flower lovers and animal protectors. The vegetarians, whose idol was "wenn Judenblut spritzt" the spilling of Jewish blood. What will life look like from now on? I catch myself humming Mendelsohn's funeral march.

The hospital is closed down. I get transferred to "Haus Stuttgart". I find myself in a room on the third floor, together with some Russian Jews. I don't understand their language and they don't understand mine either. There exist a difference of culture and customs between us. We pass the time playing chess, which had to be stored on the top of the cupboard as part of "Kultura", like the old shoes' place is in the

bath as apparel and as the food is kept in the closed cupboard because of its odour.

In the town, at the place of an old companion from the camp, I soon meet good company. Wagner Zsuzsanne with her boyfriend. We spend many a pleasant days together. It is a long climb to their place, but the long ascent keeps me in good shape. From the hill we can see a long way and the air is clear.In the distance lies Landsberg with the Lech river, smoking engines move on gleaming rails and in a lumberyard, human ants swarm around miniature tracks. On the opposite side of the river we see a steep mountain topped with a picturesque castle. A part of the city beyond is hidden from view by the mountain.

The air wafting through the window is crystal clear and the sun draws a distinct stripe on the floor. It covers the table which always has flowers on it, the pique'e covered bed and is cut off by the edge of the curtains. The room is kept clean and tidy, unlike most of the rooms which are always in a mess. The so called "foreign labourers", liberated from the camps live in filth and moral squalor.

Morals, are generally very loose, especially among the young. It is apparent how the German regime destroyed the youth. This youth born in a moment, it's morals lost, it's will power weak, it's behaviour characterized by indolence and laziness. The twisted outcome of a new world's false promises. All the tribulations, being forcibly uprooted from everyday life, loss of hope and then liberation. This had caused such an exaggeration of the body cult and the seeking of physical pleasure as to shock the more discreet. Was this the youth of the new Europe? Was this what mankind had come to? The situation elsewhere is very much the same, according to the new neighbors.

I move to a new center for displaced persons. It is difficult to live

in the camp, but there was no choice.

Here are many fleeing Hungarians who fled from the Russian army, or had declared themselves as Germans during the Nazi reign. Now they change their identity in order to protect themselves from an unpleasant future. We are all together in the same camp for Displaced Persons (D.P.s). The liberators being unable differentiate between us, placed the murderers and their victims under the same roof. People called me a spoil sport Jew and accused me of putting on "airs" since I didn't wear breeches like the former Hungarian Nazis and I read Dante! They consider me stinky Jew who could not be hurt because of the thick skin on his face. I even dare listen to the piano playing at Headquarters while the whole company crazily bellow out the fashionable jazz. Absorbed in my own hobby with a spiritual reserve, I ignore their insults and instead involve myself with those who tolerate my presence as a Jew. People don't change, only regime are slightly altered.

HARD TO GET OUT OF A VICIOUS CIRCLE

FINDING ONESELF IN AN OTHER

We the Hungarians, found ourselves registering as a separate group in a transport via Jugoslavia. We were forced to make a detour as there were not sufficient Hungarians in order to form a group to make the trip directly. We had to wait for the Russian permits to cross into the Russian occupied zone and then it turned out that the border had been closed. This meant we had to travel somehow illegally.

I am still traveling with the Dringlers and now this group was increased by a newly found relative. I believe a brother of one of the parents. This made us eight, the four older Dringlers and myself together with three youngsters. Father Dringler arranged for us to be taken on an American truck to Munchen, where there was said to be a large transport center with convoys in all direction. It is the 21st of August 1945.

When we were all packed into the truck and ready to start, it turned out that one person was missing. No one answered our agitated calls. We discovered him finally, standing under a window clutching his two breakfast eggs. Anxiously pleading for a container to keep them from breaking. We have a good laugh at this to the annoyance of our companion, who was so worried over the two eggs. We load him into the truck with us and whenever the vehicle jolted slightly, we asked one by one about the state of his precious eggs.

It is a picturesque and pleasant journey. We travel through Landsberg and say farewell to the site of both so much suffering and also many

pleasant memories. We leave behind the concert hall, the river, the chestnut trees, but also the camps, Moll and Holzmann and the mass grave with its missing occupant.

We speed on our way, free, back towards where we hope to find our beloved ones waiting. Past the bridge and the town, along serpentine roads. The women in the truck are enjoying this, their hair blowing in the wind. We fly along at a furious speed. It is fantastic. The coloured chauffeur drives the vehicle which rushes along, speeding smoothly on the first rate German road. There is something from another world in all this, as if it belonged to a far away civilization. I feel a certain contest is involved. The challenge of the American truck on the German road.

On the outskirts of Munich the devastation becomes apparent. From afar it seems like an archaeological excavation. Unending piles of ruins with here and there a burnt out chimney stack, the lonely guard of a devastated neighborhood. It seemed that Death had visited the place. Here and there no houses rose higher than the ground floor. Long rows of streets were completely demolished. From the intersection of some roads, debris spread as far as the eye could see. Bulldozers with immense shovels push and pull the debris into piles and load it onto trucks. Of the factories, which had sprung up to feed and supply the German war machine, nothing remained but burnt out walls and skeletons. What a memento mori! (Mortal memory!) Further on, some of the houses were in better shape, but none was quite intact. One has no roof, the other no windows, or neither roof nor windows, yet their first two floors were inhabitable. There are houses cut in half, with the staircase gone, so that it is impossible to reach the intact rooms. Part of a room remains and is visible, fireplace, a table laid for

dinner surrounded by three chairs and beside the table a deep void. "Wir danken unseren Fuhrer!" ("We thank our leader"!).

We arrive at a relatively better suburb. Passing. Here things are a little improved. Trams, people, rushing in the undamaged streets and heavy traffic consisting of almost exclusively American cars, big ones. Our trucks speed past a train packed with people and we reach the center of town. Todays vision of Munchen has imprinted itself upon our minds. These sights repeated themselves several times. Once it must have been a magnificent city, for even in its ruins it holds for us a fascination. Was this the place where Nazism, the SS and Gestapo had been born? Was this where the "hammer of the world" had hoisted his flag? Now, everywhere in this once magnificent, once beautiful, once so happy city of a powerful Germany, as far as the eyes could see, was nothing but silence burnt out empty walls and black masses of brick. Yet under the shadow of death, in the cellars people are having fun. Jazz music can be heard from under the earth, from the old Luftschutzraum (air raid shelter). These have been turned into champagne bars, cafes, variety shows, with seemingly simple grey people. This is how Munchen and all other cities throughout Germany were now living. People dressed in very funny ways, like fancy dress feast partaking in a very large costume ball. Ornate army uniforms, of various cadet schools and army units were to be seen everywhere, as if looted from the garment stores. Women in oversized trousers or shorts, men sometimes strolling about half naked, or bathing in the river unperturbed. Tanning themselves under the scorching sun. The wreck of a tank, as an island in a branch of the river, reminding a macabre past.

There are other Germans too. They beg for food from the Americans, they are really hungry. They are ready to make or do everything for

food. Even for one meal, even for one egg.

It is said that the Hungarian transport will depart from the Funk barracks. Having the necessary documents, we want to be on the train. However the U.N.R.A. (United Nation Relief Association) woman representative was not convinced that we could travel and guided us to the Munchen Allach camp. One of the horrible K.Z.s and now a transit centre. While she occupies herself we study the list hanging on the barrack wall. None of our relatives, even from Pecs no one is on this list.

When we get to Funk, Americans sent us to an other former concentration camp, which is even more miserable than the former. The barracks unchanged and the place filthy, with a multitude of camp accustomed, although liberated inmates. This also was a result of the Nazi era. A few kilometers away lay the fascinating ruins of Munich, the ghost of a magnificent city, the symbol of a high civilization. Here, the barbed wire fence of the former concentration camp. My eyes were opened. These two contrasts, the traditional wall of the city and the barbed wire fences of the camps had managed to get on so well together, side by side. There is no denying, the Nazis were great in leading a cultured nation by the nose, and this nation adapted the Nazi philosophy, the "Weltanschauung!" Hitler was elected in a legal, democratic way, Hindenburg gave him the power willingly. So it seems to me that the Germans even liked Hitlers leading.

It was dark by the time we move into the "Deutsches Museum" the collecting place for the transports. It turned out however that there was no suitable transport available for us and we were forced to wait a few days again.

Next day the youngsters decided to go and find some entertainment.

Edith Dringler, Jancsi, Gyorgyi, who was nicknamed Polyas, or "babe in arms" and Pista also called Hutyu, (Crazer) went in search of a film show but when they arrived at the cinema there were no tickets, so we all ended up in the zoo. Feri Weisz and myself headed there straight away by trams 21 and 10, sitting on the stairs. Our tram became stuck because the rails were still broken in places. It stopped and we had to walk for a few minutes, until we climbed into another one. Everyone seemed to be going to the zoo. It was so busy, people crowded round the small lakes and there was quite a holiday atmosphere. We were amazed. Had these people nothing better to do than seek amusement? Perhaps they are right.

We spent the whole afternoon there. I could hardly drag Feri away from the monkeys, I couldn't understand what he liked so much about those ugly, red noisy creatures, but he seemed to be so interested in them that I went over to look myself. They were fornicating. The visitors fed them with canned food and bread which the monkeys fought over wildly screaming, just like their human counter part. The Hyenas also captured our attention. Before we saw the animal, we had the impression that someone was laughing hysterically. Not only his voice was human, it had other human qualities as well.

We stayed two days in the camp and then decided to find our way back home by hook or by crook. After the "elders" made the arrangements, our luggage was taken by a porter to the railway station. Our party joined a Yugoslavian group of several thousands and boarded the long train.

The journey reveals more devastation of towns and villages, as everywhere else in Germany. The fields were covered with wrecked machinery. I am overcome by an involuntary cruel, raw joy, at their misfortune. They deserve it! I hate them so much, that I can't feel

sorry for the victims. However the natural landscape is so beautiful that it subdues my rage slightly and I begin to analyse my feeling. This rage is how the Nazis felt about us and look what came out of it all for them? Yet not all of them are the same. There was this German woman who helped me after I fled from the bombed train. How about the children, surely they cannot all be blamed! There were even a few, who never identified themselves with the cause, even sabotaged the Nazi system. Perhaps they wil read the Manns, Zweig, Heine, hear Mendelsohn, learn Freud, and they will publish the burned jewish science and their written characters again. Perhaps they will remember and honour the so many jewish Nobel prise winners again. As the German priest too in Schondorf had said. I also remember the sympathetic farmer who fed and consoled us. He respected Jews, even in those terrible times. Some sympethisers had been with us even in Auschwitz, priests, communists, homosexuals, deserters. In those terrible times, several of them had endangered themselves in order to save Jews! I am a Jew! Blind revenge is severly forbidden in our religion. Still I remember the soaring flames and the mission given to me by the children who had been burnt to ashes; the death list falling at my feet from the air; and the stories told by the Poles on a wintry day. I have an obligation to fulfil! I look at the landscape and stop thinking.

With our feet dangling from the train, we gaze at the snow topped mountains. We pass a large lake and pass Salzburg. By dusk the landscape takes on a mysterious beauty. At night we speed go through lit up towns and the silhouettes of ruins.

The border between the American and English zones is near Salzburg. The station here is comparatively undamaged and the border control takes place without a hitch. So we continue our journey.

At dawn we can again admire the sunrise over the Alps. As the first light of the day throws a beam that paints the snow on the high mountain tops. Everything begins to glimmer in this first light. One year before we had seen the Carpathian mountains in similar festive outfit. How this had moved us then! Agi, Dudu, and all my beloved ones had been staying around me, full of hope. We had been told "whoever isn't afraid to work, has nothing to fear". We believed these murderers! Agi and myself even returned to the train, inspite of the fact that we could have stayed in the hut of the train worker, outside.

God in heavens! What thoughts this beautiful scenery arouses in my soul! Will it be like this forever ? What had they told us? You will meet again "after the bath"! How can I continue to live with a stomach full of this sort of stuff? And the Arschloch of Landsberg told the pregnant women, he will "send them to the other side" of the Swiss border. Alas, as we found out later, he sent them to the other side, indeed: right into heaven.

When we arrived at Villach, we learn that under Tito's orders, we would not be allow us to enter Yugoslavia. We, the "children", strolled on the platform and struck by the presence of a fortified train, examined it's armoury.

Then we had to part from the Jugoslavian transport and our small group was forced to board another train. So by zigzagging, we approach our goal, the Hungarian border.

We travel through a series of tunnels. Every time we emerge from the dark, a different view reveals itself before our eyes. We pass through viaducts over rushing rivulets below, while pine forests and glittering snow capped mountain accompany us on our way. The swirling river and

the road form parallel stripes. We catch the glimpse of a Red Cross car, it disappears as we go into the tunnel, to give place to different pictures each drawn by nature. Alas, I am unable to show the beauty of all this nature, to the missing ones.

We pass through Gurktal and Leoben into beautiful Austria. I had been here in 1937. Then my father took me in his car to the Burgenland to a summer holiday camp, called the "Schtolz Alpen". It was there, that I received my first beating and humiliation for being a Jew. I was nine years old at the time. No doubt my influence was a great danger to the Christian, Arian community, for so it seemed according to their behaviour. "Holla-reee, holla-row" they sang and whistled as I was tied to a tree and beaten up until my nose and mouth bled. Then the governess came and freed me, laughing away these foolish children's pranks, with a cynical grin on her face. They yhreatened me, if I would dare to denounce them... I felt deeply intimidated and kept quite. So I received the first lesson on judaism. My shirt spotted with blood since, I lied to my granny that I didn't remember how this came about. I "forgot", and never said it to anyone. It had been burried somewhere in my deep conscience until now, and by sudden I remember.

We stayed in Leoben for some time and I went into town with Feri, where we bought some postcards. We were sorry not to think of doing this earlier. Our memories were still very fresh, but a few postcards might make a difference later.

At Graz we left the main line and headed towards Fehring. There in the English zone we were received very hospitably. We were allowed to stay in an empty German house, where we could live by ourselves and run the place as we liked. We picked potatoes and maize from the neighboring fields. It was here that we first saw the new Hungarian

currency, the 500 Pengoe notes. These were equivalent to the old Hungarian Nazi party 100 Pengoes. This Nazi party, the "Arrow Cross" had been in power a short time, but long enough to exterminate tenths of thousand of Jews in a sadistic manner. They marched them to the Danube river, in the winter of 1944, broke the ice, shot them into the icy water by the thousands... We were amazed to see this new money and especially that everybody was holding such vast quantities of it. The owners laughed at us, saying that this money wasn't worth wery much. They bhese owners brought horses to smuggle them into Hungary and this seemed to be very good business.

It was said that at the border all our belongings would be taken away. This rumor encouraged me to open all my sardine tins and eat the sadines together with some fine biscuits. I had saved these especially for those who I might find at home. Then the Dringlers met some people who by means of their hungarian made vechicle, the MATEOSZ truck, bought it in Austria, obtained the privilege of taking the "deported" people home. This was the first time I have been referred to in this manner. A sort of expression for those, who were "taken in exile" by the Hungarian and the German. An expression instead of "Jew" the nickname representing everything evil during those long years. Now, the population had to refer to us in a more tolerable way, not hurting our feelings by saying we are "Jews". I accepted the fact that the term "deported" referred to me. We already knew, that across the border this term tasted just as "Jewish" with the same dirty meaning as in the past. It was a somewhat longer word, but it's meaning was just the same.

Two years before it wouldn't have been advisable to carry "deported" in a truck into Hungary, as cover for smuggling a car across the

border. Even now it had to be planned. We waited for the evening, and the rain. To cover us from undesirable onlookers, but not enough to prevent the truck advancing through the mire. We neared the border just before dusk and though I am not superstitious, when we met a chimney sweep everyone touched a button for luck. We park under a large porch which hid the truck from view. Yet an Austrian guard approached us at once.

He was called inside by the daughter of the owner of the house, who persuaded him that everything was in order. This occurence urged us to move and we continued on our way immediately. We hid ourselves in the straw we prepared in time in the back of the truck. The truck was itself covered with a big canvas covering, to save us both from the rain as well as from prying eyes. It gave the appearance that it was only loaded with hay. The driver muffled the exhaust pipe and after a while, left the main road for a dirt track.

The truck moved on in the darkness with jolts and bumps. Making as little noise as possible. Yet we were a little anxious, lest our parcels which, thank God, were quite numerous might make someone suspicious. But we managed to cross the Russian and Austrian zones into no man's land without difficulty. There the driver stopped beside a small hut, where a light gleamed below the shutters. He asked for direction and received information about the Hungarian border station. We prepared ourselves for the risk. We knew, if the hungarian are curious, we will be caught. They are not so naive, when they see straw, that means :there must be something under it.

We turned back onto the main road, freed the exhaust pipe, put on the lights and sped through rain and mud towards the Hungarian control post. At the border the driver flashed his blinding light into the

guard's face. We lay tensely under the tarpaulin. The guard shouted asking: "Ruski?"- "Ruski", came the reply. "Drive on!" was heard and the muddy truck with his straw cargo crossed the border.

The next Hungarian border town, Szombathely, a Russian guard sat in front of the officers casino, from where loud music disrupted the silence of the night. Here we were back in Hungary! We unloaded the luggage in the courtyard of a large restaurant since the truck would carry us no further and we slept on our baggage. That is, those of us who could sleep, in view of the intense mid september cold and excitement.

We stayed there for a whole day during which the newly organized "Jewish committee" which consisted of the seven Jews who had returned before us gave us some Hungarian money. Obtained from the American "Joint". We were again very happy to receive such a large sum, but at the market it turns out to be just about enough to buy barely a kilo of grapes. This was the first time in over a year that I ate grapes. That evening a car from the committee took us and our luggage to the station and we climbed into a train again.

Being "deported" we were privileged to be given half a carriage to ourselves. The train was crammed with all sort of people. Now we were again referred to as the "stinking Jews", this time in our native language. So the journey began in a "homely atmosphere."

We were grateful that half the carriage was reserved for us and tired from the frosty night I fell asleep almost immediately. This was not before I secured all my possessions as well as I could. For fear that a watchful eye might arrange to free me from my burden, while I slept. People seem to like to exchange by mere accident their own things for the possessions of those of others! I lay down on my rucksack without

taking it off, laid my head upon my hand luggage and even tied it to my neck. I wore my other bags on my side so that if any one wanted to take these "by mistake", he would have to carry me along as well.

Our connection, which was supposed to arrive at 7 in the morning, had run off the rails at Vizvar and didn't arrive till the afternoon. We tried to play parlour games, but everyone was impatient, in anticipation, as to who might might be found at home.

At Nagykanizsa we had to take separate trains in different directions. The Dringlers and all their group went to Kaposvar and I was left to travel to Pecs by myself.

The delay had caused a great crowd to form at the station and there was such a chaos when the train arrived that I had hardly time to say a proper good bye to my friends, the Dringlers, before they were gone. For a moment it was depressing to be suddenly completely alone. It remind me the first selection. Arriving in Birkenau, but I soon got used to it. I picked up my luggage, which was heavy but I couldn't afford to put it down again, or it would have been stolen in a flash.

My train came. I climbed in and sat down near some Russian soldiers. One of them looked very much like the Lithuanian Winik, whom I had been with at Kaufering 4. I try to question him for confirmation, but receive no positive reply, "Nie poinimais". However he is a Lithuanian as well. Interesting, I thought, how different nationalities can be distinguished by their facial features.

We rode past a few villages which were familiar to me. Szigetvar, than Nagypeterd, where my father had worked with his labour unit. Would I see the road they had built? Yes indeed it was there! But where were the high spirited people who had built it? Their hands had been grazed severely until they had made themselves strong gloves in order to

handle the big, 30-40 kilo boulders which formed the base layer of this road. These people were not used to this type of work, yet they undertook it sportively as best they could. Until they collapsed.

Father had a white arm band on at the time as he converted to the Christian faith by marrying my stepmother in 1938. He practised the religion and went every Sunday to the church where he prayed with great piety. This did not make any difference. He was taken into the Jewish work brigades and not to the Hungarian army.

Later, but still as early as 1943, this labour force had been taken away to the Eastern front. My father suffering a slipped disk, was sent to the reserves. They simply forgot about him until the identification, at the time I was taken to the ghetto. All of those, in his working unit had been in their forties and early fifties. Where were they now? How many had survived their tribulations?

The youngsters among the Work-brigades had been taken to the Russian front where they had been sent into the mine field "to detect the mines". Most of them died on their first mission. Those who survived were recruited again until none almost none remained. Others were exterminated in the most variable manner. There were units, which after a 40 Kilometer heavy march were sent to sleep in a stable, which was sat on fire. Those who managed to brake out, were gunned down. Others worked until they died of hunger, diseases, beatings or were hanged for tiny irregularities of discipline, like wearing of extra undercloth. Every one held his death sentence when he took his rucksack. Even if the gendarm took this rucksack immediately after arriving to the working unit. There wwas no sick, treatment, there was no mercy. The Hungarian watchman, the "frame" soldiers received money for everything, including the possesionsthey themselves stole. Whose who had no money

were as good as dead. Only rarely were the commandant was human. There most of the unit survived. This proves, that it was only a question of behaviour. This I learned from a jew who got on the train. He had the luck to be in one of the rare fortunate units, which remained in Hungaria.

The very rails on which I travel now had been used when the "deportation" took place. For the women, the old, the children and the sick. When they had been taken away, their men were already dead.

My father had had exceptional luck in not being sent to Russia. Or so I thought. What had happened to him, when I was collected to be taken to the ghetto? That was a year and a half ago. I hoped he had passed the interrogation successfully.

We leave Szentlorinc behind us very slowly. Here and there we come across a few bomb craters, the train was actually going quite fast, but to me it seemed to be traveling at the pace of a snail. Gradually the familiar shape of the slopes of Mecsek mountain became visible. The Misina look out tower on top of them came into view. From there the Jugoslavian border could be seen on a clear day. Then came the Pius college of the Piarist clerical order. There after being converted, Ivan Rado had been taught as a resident, before being taken away directly to the train.

The train passes on, we must be nearing the Jewish cemetery now. It lies slightly before the Lakics barracks. Everything reawakens in me as if it was yesterday. We pass the ghetto area. The high wooden wall is gone and the big building stands out as before the big massacre. That city which had cast me out approaches. I am coming back to call her to account, for my family and for Agi.

The train comes to a halt, but I pay no attention. The sight of every

tree awakens memories which overflow in me. The streets, where I was a little child, led by my Austrian governess who begged for a vacation to travel to Vienna. "You may go", said my unkle, Alexander Roth, "on my account". "Have you a programme for your holidays in Vienna?" "I will vote" came the definit answer. "For whom?" "for Hitler of course!" "So than, you may remain there" she was told.

The tram stop is at its regular place before the station. Here the pump company band used to play every Sunday to welcome the ladies and gentleman from Budapest arriving on discount train. Now the place is deserted. No music.

I wait for the tram. My parcels are large and the conductor and four passengers make sharp hints as to my origin. At first I keep silent, until someone remarks that I must probably only be spoken to in Hebrew. Then I burst out. It is now their turn to shut up and a tense silence reigns for the rest of the journey. "First impressions leave their mark on the whole process." my scouts leader once said. I feel at "home". This is how I my native city Pecs, receives me. It is September 27th, 1945.

My first impression has formed already. I had imagined things would be different. Yet they are still angry with me. It would be interesting to know why? Do they know me? What do they know about me, except that I must be spoken to in hebrew? I remain silent.

The tram takes me to Majlat Square. The big statue still holds his hand on his sword in a pledge, the other one resting on his heart. Now I remember the old joke I heard in my childhood days. This Hungarian hero symbol of dignity and courage, is afraid of his wallet being stolen by the Jews, coming out from the synagogue.

On the same big square, at the familiar window of Agi's family, a

strange woman looks out indifferently. I cross to the Jewish community center near the synagogue. It lies behind the rear of the statue. Here I ask for information.

"Dudu, your sister has come back." " She is with Gyuri Fodor, they seem happy now." He had returned all the way on foot from the bend on the Don river after the big Russians broke through. Then the Hungarian chief of staff called his soldiers, to save themselves as they can. He had been sent to a forced labour camp there. The couple had been registered as married in his absence, an arrangement known as "distance marriage". This happened even before we had been taken to the ghetto ourselves.

"Your father is at home. He had a day off from his camp and came home the day before the Russians arrived. Your step mother and brother remained home all the time", I am told.

"You are very lucky" interrupts a Jew I never saw in my life. I am overcome with a warmth and a wonderful calm. What he said was no matter now. Unaware the stranger continues, "I am now alone in my village, and came to Pecs, because, you know, here we are not alone and we must band together. Precaution never does any harm."

Already there are other questions that occupy my mind. How about Agi, and her family? May be some one has returned from the boys, my scouts group? The clerk goes through the short community list and asks about names. Not one of the young men, except a few who were at the labour camps, had returned. And now you." The Moldovanyis'? Agi's family? " "Yes! Yes!" "No! No!" No one returned. Neither had Agi.

This is not "THE END", life must go on!